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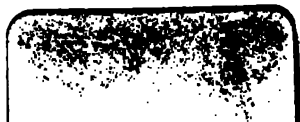
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EVERY DAY PAPERS.

VOL. II.



# EVERY DAY PAPERS.

BY

ANDREW HALLIDAY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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## EVERY DAY PAPERS.

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### TWOPENNY TOWN.

19 TwOPENNY TOWN is one of the most salubrious, and yet one of the most despised, quarters of the metropolis. Persons with a turn for gentility, who have so far got on in life as to be able to reside in the aristocratic neighbourhood of Russell-square, speak of Twopenny Town with the greatest contempt. When they wish to mark the low social status of a person, they mention with a sneer that he lives at Twopenny Town. They talk facetiously of Twopenny Town as a distant and unknown region, to which only the most adventurous explorers have penetrated, and from

which travellers have returned to tell strange tales of rude and inhospitable natives, who live in ground-floor parlours, poison their guests with twenty-seven shilling sherry, and go out to parties in cleaned gloves. In these aristocratic circles—albeit within ten minutes' walk of the Mob-Cap, the centre and capital of the despised region—the very mention of Twopenny Town is considered equivalent to a good joke. It calls up in the genteel mind's eye absurd pictures of life in parlours, bed and breakfast for ten shillings a week, with use of sitting-room, and dinner on Sundays; evening parties with beef sandwiches for supper; chairs and sofas covered with American leather cloth, and a general sitting down to tea—with shrimps when in season, otherwise “creases”—at five o'clock. In fact, Twopenny Town, from the Russell-square point of view, is a monstrously absurd place; a laughable place altogether.

There are some persons so keenly conscious of the ridicule which attaches to Twopenny Town, that they will never own that they live there. When Russell-square asks them where they dwell, they artfully avoid reproach by saying, “Up the Park way.” When Russell-square and Twopenny Town start together from the West-end, bound for home, and Russell-square

says, "Which way do you go?" Twopenny Town cautiously replies, "Northward." I really believe there are people of genteel aspirations who sneak in and out of Twopenny Town every day as if Twopenny Town were a wild beast's lair or the hiding-place of a thief. When Russell-square happens to be in the neighbourhood, and catches a resident in the act of being there, treading in an accustomed manner the pavements of Twopenny Town, the resident immediately stammers out an apology for his misconduct, and says he has been to visit a person "up that way." Perfectly conscious of all this, and even admitting the ungentle character of the quarter, I am nevertheless willing publicly to own, not that, when I proceed towards my home, I "go northward," or that my residence is "up the Park way," but plainly, in a straightforward manner, that I live and treasure my Lares and Penates in the very heart of Twopenny Town. I am not ashamed of it; on the contrary, I glory in it.

You—I am addressing Russell-square—have no idea what a wonderful place Twopenny Town is. It is such a very wonderful place, and so little known in the haunts of genteel civilization in which you move, that I am very much tempted

to write an account of my travels and residence in the region, to be published by Mr Murray, in a thick volume, printed in large type, with marginal references, foot-notes, and a map. Looking from my window at this moment, I have a full view of all the wonders of science and art at one glance.

That great invention, steam, displays itself in all its remarkable applications to the purposes of man. I see railway trains incessantly rattling along, tearing madly after each other, and apparently playing at follow my leader among the chimneys; underneath I see a steam barge puffing up the canal like an amphibious locomotive; I see also the mast of a ship, and, above all, the electric telegraph ruling the sky, like a sheet of blue wove Bath post, for music. Right and left, photographers meet my view, exhausting the beams of the summer sun, and, as it appears to me, bringing on winter prematurely, in their endeavours to fix the lineaments of Twopenny Townians on slips of card, at the charge of ten shillings a dozen. My wonderful prospect takes in any number of yellow omnibuses, that go "all the way" for twopence; any number of red ditto that go all the way for a penny; three pastrycooks ready and willing to execute wedding orders at five minutes' notice; four under-

takers equally ready and willing to execute funeral ditto, with the same promptitude, at charges to suit any length of pocket and any depth of grief.

When I add to this an emporium for the supply of claret at twelve shillings a dozen, I think you will allow that my view is a most comprehensive one, and that the wonders of nature, art, science, and commerce, are concentrated in Twopenny Town in a tableau well adapted for the frontispiece of a school edition of the Wonders of the World. Stay. I forgot to mention a figure of Britannia on the top of a public-house, and a lion couchant on the summit of a brewery. When a balloon happens to travel this way, my view may be said to embrace the whole circle of the sciences. If Zadkiel should be in need of a good telling hieroglyphic, let him come up and take a sketch from my window. There was a fine chance for him the other day, when the British lion was asleep on the top of the brewery, Britannia was having her shield taken down for repairs, and a locomotive was taking a leap from the viaduct into the street below. It was a tableau well calculated to indicate portent of grief to Britannia.

I might say that Twopenny Town is in the



perpetual enjoyment of all the luxuries of the season. What is there that heart or hand could desire that it does not possess? Will any one be good enough to mention the article? Aristocracy? Why there is a lady in Full-Moon-street, who is the rightful heir to the throne, and has papers to prove it, if anybody would only look at them. This royal personage, coming down my street in a yellow satin gown, with a troop of boys at her heels, puts a touch to the hieroglyphic which leaves nothing to be desired, except, perhaps, an eclipse of the sun.

The drama? Are not all our back drawing-rooms stages? all our young men and women merely players, having their exits and their entrances by the same one door on the landing at the top of the stairs among the cups and saucers? I can assure you when we engage in theatricals, we do the thing in style, print the programmes on scented note paper with embossed borders, and get up all our pieces with appropriate scenery and the correct costumes. Our company never had a break down but once, and that was when we played Box and Cox at the Theatre Royal, Fourteen, Melpomene Terrace. Jobbins, who played Box, was a great stickler for the realities, and *would* insist upon having a real fire, and a

real mutton chop to throw out of window. It certainly was very natural and effective to see Jobbins, as Box, come in and chuck a real chop, frizzling from the fire, out of a real window into a real street ; but unfortunately, a crusty old gentleman with a white hat on his head was passing at the moment, and the chop fell right on the crown of the hat, and printed off an impression of itself with the gravy. The old gentleman was in an awful rage, and rang the bell, and made such a disturbance that we were obliged to stop the performance. We began it all over again, however, when he went away, taking the precaution to station a policeman outside to warn the people off when the chop was coming. Some one said that a policeman caught the chop, and was seen going off gnawing it, but I can't answer for that. I only know that the crusty old gentleman brought an action for the damage done to his hat, and recovered four-and-ninepence with costs.

The private pursuit of the drama in the more select quarters of Twopenny Town has been greatly conducive to matrimony. On several occasions the mimic love of the stage has ripened into the real article, and led to performances of another kind, which, in respect of a procession of

maidens clad in white, and the employment of grey horses, may not improperly be described as spectacular and equestrian. If it be true that a difference of disposition in man and wife is necessary to preserve the true balance of matrimonial happiness, then, I should say, our stage-made marriages are likely to turn out well, as in most cases they have been a union of tragedy and comedy. We all thought for a long time it was Mrs Bouncer that Box was sweet upon, and that Iago (we play a selection, usually the third act) had fixed his affections upon Emilia. But it proved in the end to be quite the contrary. Box got spliced to Emilia, and Mrs Bouncer was led to the hymeneal altar by Iago. This arrangement, otherwise happy, was so far disadvantageous that it led to the retirement of both parties from the boards, Box being averse to Emilia playing with strange Iagos, and Iago being averse to Mrs Bouncer playing with strange Boxes. An attempt was made to accommodate matters, but without success. Iago could not stoop to low comedy, and Box found it wholly beyond his power to elevate himself to the level of high tragedy. The consequence is that Iago and Box now confine themselves to solo recitations; Iago giving us Brutus and Cassius, and Box his

own serio-comic poem of the "Cheery Periwinkle."

Is there anything else you would like to mention? Music? Could a community desire anything better than the Minerva Music Hall? It has this advantage over the opera, that you are not obliged to go in evening-dress. No one but the head waiter wears a dress coat and a white choker, and the prices are, body of the hall twopence, balcony fourpence, stalls ninepence. The amount of talent which is displayed for these moderate charges is immense. Look at the bill—

"Mr and Mrs Loppits, the charming duettists; Signor and Signora Polloni, the versatile dramatic operatic couple; Joe Barnes, the comic; Gus Davis, the funny little man; Mademoiselle Pettitoe, the charming ballerina and transformation dancer; Paddy Fannagan, the characteristic Irishman; and stunning Joe Pollock, the pet of Twopenny Town."

The mud-bespattered brougham that you see waiting at the door about half-past nine belongs to Mr and Mrs Loppits, the charming duettists. I am surprised that the proprietor does not mention the brougham in the bills, for it is almost as charming as Mr and Mrs Loppits themselves. Ladies and gentlemen proceeding to the body of

the hall, twopence, pause to gaze upon it with awe and admiration. Gentlemen, whose means are inadequate to the body of the hall, twopence, are content to remain outside and pat Mr and Mrs Loppits' horse, by the kind permission of Mr and Mrs Loppits' coachman, a grave and dignified person, who appears to ignore the music-hall, and to try to look as if his connection with Mr and Mrs Loppits did not extend beyond the legitimate duty of driving their brougham. I should mention that Mr and Mrs Loppits' horse is a tall aristocratic-looking animal, with a Roman nose, and is known to some irreverent grooms in the adjoining mews as Julius Cæsar.

I am inclined to think that our music-hall was formerly a chapel. My reason for so thinking is that the body of the hall is furnished with rows of narrow desks instead of tables. These desks, though used at present as a resting-place for pewter pots, seem to have been originally designed to support hymn books. The material of the desks being plain deal, and the grain coarse, I should say that the denomination was methodistical and primitive. The clock in the front of the gallery is of a sombre and severe aspect, and the effort it makes to cover its face with two hands and a half, seems to imply that

it is ashamed to keep time to the present goings on. This disposes me to think that it may at one time have been used to Sunday duty and sermons.

Mr and Mrs Loppits are charming duettists undoubtedly. They generally enact lovers, Mrs Loppits, strong-minded, in a low-bodied pink dress. Mr Loppits, weak-minded and bashful, in a fluffy white hat and bed-curtain trousers. Mr Loppits' assumption of bashfulness by putting his forefinger in his mouth and shaking himself laterally is much esteemed. The steadiness of the chorus which comes in at the end of the dialogue, as if Mr and Mrs Loppits had been wound up for it, is also greatly admired. Mr and Mrs Loppits "oblige again" three times, and then depart down the body of the hall with two carpet bags, followed by admiring eyes, until they disappear to enter their brougham. The greatest favourite, and deservedly so, is "Joe Barnes, the Comic." Mr Barnes comes on in a little white hat with a little black band round it, and wears a very short tartan jacket. The humours which he expresses by cocking his hat on the front of his head, the back of his head, the side of his head, and by pulling it right over his eyes, are as various as the chords of the

human heart. His hat may be said to sweep the whole lyre of the comic muse. Mr Joe Barnes's favourite songs are Naughty Jemima Brown, The Barber's Wife, and Fickle False Matilda. All three point morals. Naughty Jemima Brown is an example of ingratitude. Her young man took her out and treated her to cakes and wine, but notwithstanding all his kindness, naughty Jemima jilted him. The Barber's Wife is a faithless woman, who being struck with remorse, puts an end to her existence with the weapon most convenient for the rhythm and the rhyme, which happens to be a carving-knife. This is much applauded. But the prime favourite is Matilda, who having a chorus, can be taken up by the whole audience. When Mr Joe Barnes stamps his foot and says, "Now then, all together," stalls, body of the hall, and balconies, break forth in unison :

Matilda! Matilda!  
Fickle, false Matilda!  
She's broke my heart and ruined me,  
That faithless bonnet build-ah.

She was a very greedy, gormandizing young woman was Matilda, ate pounds of pork sausages, drank gin-and-water, and went on in such an outrageous way, that we quite sympathized with

the young man when he confesses that "he thought he should have killed-ah."

Paddy Fannagan's song of the Irish wake is highly characteristic. Paddy Fannagan comes on in a bob-tailed frieze coat, and a hat without a brim or a crown—the national costume of Ireland—and puts his shillelah on the floor, saying that it represents the body of the deceased Patrick O'Whack. Mr Fannagan then puts a red handkerchief round his head, and at once becomes Shelah, weeping and wailing over the lifeless form of Patrick. He takes off the red handkerchief, and becomes Murdoch O'Grady, roundly abusing the prostrate Patrick as a big blackguard, and after subjecting the corpse to every indignity, concludes, amid thunders of applause, by spitting in Patrick's eye. If you have anything in the characteristic way that will match this in the neighbourhood of Russell-square, perhaps you will just say so.

The performances of Mademoiselle Pettitoe, the charming ballerina and transformation dancer, are described in the bills as "pleasing," which, however, is a weak expression. They may be said to be highly sensational. Mademoiselle Pettitoe comes on first of all as a Scotch fish girl, dances in a manner characteristic of Scotia,



and runs off to return the next minute as an Irish colleen, with a jig; then a dusky daughter of Egypt, and in rapid and breathless succession as a female representative of Spain, Italy, Poland, and other picturesque countries, until she reduces her costume to that scant condition which leaves nothing beyond but the assumption of the God of Love. When Mademoiselle Pettitoe dances violently in this character, with nothing on to speak of but a bow and arrow, there is always a feverish expectation mingled with some apprehension that she will incontinently appear next, without going off, as Venus.

Have we got anything in Twopenny Town like the Pantheon, or the Burlington Arcade? Have we not? Just look at Main-street in the evening, when the naphtha lamps are lighted. Why, there is a mile of Pantheon on one side, and a mile of Burlington Arcade on the other—a moving panorama of life and merchandise in all its branches. What d'ye lack? What may you be pleased to require? Name the article. Rings, pins, brooches, chains, combs, garters, embroidered strips for petticoats, onions, oysters, fried fish, tinted note paper, umbrellas, all the popular music of the day, cucumbers, illustrated works of fiction, boot-laces, roots, artificial

flowers, net caps, crinolines, plates and dishes, teacups, saucepans, bears' grease, herb pills—they are all here, and a thousand choice articles *de Londres* besides. Why, Main-street is the *Palais Royale al fresco*. Look at our baked potato machine! Is there another like it in London—in the world? In other quarters it is a mere can; here it is a vast machine with a furnace beneath, and no end of drawers above with bushels of potatoes in every stage of readiness. And here I may remark that I don't know any place except Twopenny Town where you can get baked potatoes and fried fish all the year round. In heat and in cold, in joy and in sorrow, baked potatoes and fried fish are constant to us still.

Is it amusement combined with instruction you require? There is the Bacon Institute in Fryer-street, alternating lectures on the causes of pauperism and crime with recitals from the dramatic poets, an address to the inhabitants on the abuses prevalent in the vestry, and an "Olla Podrida of Fun, Fact, Fancy, and Ventriloquy, by Mr Inigo Inwards." N.B. An infant's school on the ground floor, and the hall let on Sundays to preachers of any denomination, who are prepared to pay the exceedingly moderate rent in advance.

Then there is the People's Forum in Canal-bridge-road, where we have the rights of man on Monday, the wrongs of the working classes on Tuesday, demonstrations against the highway rate on Wednesday, tea meetings with prayer on Thursday, rifle band on Friday, and the trial of John Barleycorn on Saturday; judge, jury, counsel, and witnesses, all being local converts from habits of the most frightful intemperance to the principles of total abstinence, the counsel for the prosecution affording a most edifying example as one who, through intemperance, was the death of his aged grandmother.

If you ask where we, the inhabitants of Twopenny Town, are in the habit of going on Sunday, I answer you that we are in the habit of going to church on Sunday. And we have a choice of churches in Twopenny Town—a very wide choice of churches. I don't think there is a denomination that you could mention, from the Church of England in all its varieties of high, low, and broad, down to the Latter-day Saints and the Shakers, that does not boast a temple within our district. And we are well supplied with out-door religious exercises besides. There is a clergyman of the Church of England who preaches every Sunday, weather permitting, in

gown and bands, from a Windsor chair in front of the Mob Cap. He is very popular, and can always manage to hold the attention of his audience when he does not extend his sermon beyond one o'clock. When he is indiscreet enough to overstep that limit, he finds that the attractions of beer are too much for him.

A little higher up the road we are edified by an awakened tinman, who draws his illustrations from his own family circle, and occasionally tells us what pious thoughts came into his wife's head when she was washing the greens for dinner. The tinman has so often mentioned his boy Tommy in a religious and doctrinal connection, that I begin to regard Tommy as an extra Scriptural personage, and an essential part of the new doctrine. I have a vague sort of feeling that some day or other I shall be required to subscribe to Tommy. In the evening, a youth of tender years addressed us, with his eyes shut, as "Oh, his friends," from the top of a four and a half gallon cask close to the open side-door of the House of Call for Plasterers. This preaching is promoted by the landlady of the House of Call for Plasterers, who stands at the door to listen—leaving her daughters to serve at the bar—and appears greatly to profit by the youth's ministrations.

tions, both as a publican and as a sinner. If heresy and strange doctrine be what you want, come to Twopenny Town. There is a chapel up the road where all the heresies are introduced the moment they arrive from Oxford or South Africa. The reverend proprietor sends round circulars to inform us when he has added any strange doctrine to his collection. We have had all the new things as they came out; the Rejection of the Thirty-nine Articles; the Denial of Moses; the Explosion of Noah's Ark, &c.; and I have no doubt that the Fallacy of Baptismal Regeneration "will shortly be added."

Literature? Twopenny Town boasts two newspapers, solely devoted to the interests of the locality, recording from week to week, for the small charge of one penny, the doings of the vestry, the local improvement board, and the workhouse committee, and keeping a sharp eye—two sharp eyes—upon the half-yearly rating. N. B. Advertisements threepence a line; servants wanting places, and apartments to let, with or without board, or partial, at a reduction. The editors, or proprietors, have no objection to call and leave you copies early on the day of publication. Five circulating libraries within a radius of a quarter of a mile, where all the oldest stand-

ard works may be obtained ; twopence a volume for as long as you like, and the librarians don't mind if you never return them.

The Fine Arts ? The barber's in Nobthatchstreet, where you may have your hair cut for three-pence—including brushing by machinery—and enjoy the contemplation of all the masters, old and young, on view, or for sale; on view gratis, or on sale, a genuine Coreggio, two pound fifteen, with a pot of bear's grease, or a bottle of wash for thinness on the top, thrown in.

Is there anything else you would like to mention ? Nothing. Very well then ; allow that Twopenny Town is a world in itself, leaving nothing to be desired.

## HAPPY IDIOTS.

THE dream of the monks and hospitallers of old has been realized—alms-giving has become an art; indeed, it may be said, a fine art. Among all the institutions of the country there are none so well organized, so liberally conducted, or so carefully and thoughtfully adapted to their purpose, as those which are designed to relieve the sufferings and mitigate the misfortunes of humanity. Here in England there is scarcely a disease either of the mind or body, scarcely even a deformity, for whose alleviation some hospital has not been provided by the inexhaustible charity of the people. And our hospitals and asylums vie in architectural magnificence with the mansions of the rich and great. When the intelligent foreigner is making his way towards London by the South Eastern Railway, and sees on every side magnificent buildings rising majestically from woods and gardens rich in stately timber, and glowing with rare

plants and flowers, he is apt to inquire the names of the great English milords who own those splendid seats. This splendid palace on the left, with the British flag floating proudly from its summit. Surely this must be the residence of a royal prince?

No, monsieur, it is the residence of some two or three hundred poor creatures who are suffering from incurable diseases. It is an hospital! This mansion on the right with broad terraces, sparkling fountains, and velvet lawns. The ancestral seat of a duke? No, it is but an asylum for idiots! By-and-by a bright château rising from among the rich dark woods—a home for orphan children. Anon, a castle of glittering granite, surrounded by trim grounds and highly cultivated fields. The stronghold of a proud English baron, of all the barons, perhaps, come down from Magna Charta, and taken up house together? Nay, a reformatory for criminal children, distinguished inheritors of evil ways and vicious habits. The intelligent foreigner may well listen in mute astonishment. The reflections which arise even in the mind of a native are perplexing enough. Down by the sides of the railway, on the brink of ditches and stagnant pools, away in the open fields among reeking brick-fields and festering manure-heaps, huddled



together in damp and muddy villages, and by-and-by in the pent and stifling streets of the murky city, he sees the homes of the honest hard-working poor—homes that are but pig-sties in comparison with the magnificent hospitals and asylums which British charity has raised for the idiot, the lunatic, and the criminal.

At first sight the contrast presents itself as a strange anomaly. It would almost seem that, in this country, to be unfortunate is to be fortunate, to be poor is to be rich; that, for the advantage of physical comfort, it is better to be mad than sane; better to be an idiot than to have the full use of one's faculties; better to be a youthful criminal than an honest, hard-working, well-behaved boy. And, indeed, it is not too much to say that these lunatics, idiots, and young criminals, are the only persons in the whole community who are enabled fully to enjoy the comfort, the cleanliness, the wholesome diet, and the regularity of habits which make up the great and sovereign recipe, according to all wisdom and experience, for insuring health and the capability for happiness.

These reflections, and many others in the same strain, arose in my mind with irresistible force the other day, when I paid a visit to the Idiot

Asylum at Earlswood. Driving down from the Reigate station in a handsomely appointed carriage that I found waiting for me, I conceived the idea that I was proceeding on a visit to some wealthy landowner.

This idea was further increased and strengthened, when, after a rapid, dashing drive of twenty minutes or so, the carriage turned sharply through an archway, and entered the gates of a large and beautiful mansion, situated on a commanding elevation, overlooking broad terraces with flights of stone steps, leading down to the green lawns, studded with shrubs and trees and intersected by parterres of many-coloured flowers. Still dwelling upon the idea of the landowner, it occurred to me that my host could be nothing less than a duke. Nor did I quite lose this impression when I noticed some hundreds of men, women, and children, many of them obviously of the poorer class, disporting themselves on the grass, or marching in procession, preceded by a band of music.

No doubt his grace the duke was giving a fête to his tenants and humble dependants. It was, indeed, some considerable time before I entirely lost sight of the noble and princely proprietor. There he was with the duchess at his side, on the steps of the grand entrance waiting to receive me ;

and when he had condescendingly given me his august hand, and kindly introduced me to the duchess, he handed me over to the major-domo, a magnificent and imposing personage, six feet two in his stockings, who forthwith conducted me to the banqueting-hall. Here, in a delightfully cool apartment, large and lofty, with a triple window of great plate-glass panes, looking out upon the beautiful garden, and a wide extent of richly wooded country, I enjoy a substantial, but at the same time an elegant repast, while a neat-handed, soft-footed nymph in white garments stands behind my chair and waits upon me, wafting upon my sense, as she passes to and from the sideboard, a gentle breeze, redolent of clean frock. At home in my own house—it may be in Belgrave-square—I have viands richer than these; I have a finer carpet, as white a table-cloth, as attentive a servitor; but I have not this light, this air, this odour of cleanness, this palpable scent of pure country health. I imagine that it must be his grace the duke's best room; his company room, his grand *salon de réception*. But, as I pass down the corridor, on my way to the grounds, I notice many such rooms, all large, light, airy, clean, and cheerful. Happy idiots!

Descending from the noble terrace by a flight

of stone steps, I come upon the whole of the inmates of the Asylum, disporting themselves upon the lawn. They number in all three hundred and seventy, two hundred and sixty being males, and one hundred and ten females. They are of all ages, ranging from a grey-haired old lady of sixty, to a child of five years ; and of all ranks, from the sons of prosperous merchants, it may be noblemen, down to the children of poor clerks and petty tradespeople. The Asylum at Earlswood is not absolutely a charity. All who can afford it, pay for their maintenance, and in some instances pay handsomely. Those who cannot afford to pay are elected by the votes of the subscribers, and are maintained gratuitously. The receipts of the Asylum are thus, to a certain extent, a common fund for the support of all the inmates ; although those who maintain themselves receive special advantages according to the amount of their payments. But none of the inmates, however poor they may be, are deprived of any of the essentials of comfort. A patient who pays a hundred or a hundred and fifty pounds a year may have a separate apartment and an attendant entirely to himself ; but as regards the necessaries and comforts essential to health and enjoyment of life, the rich and the poor are on the same footing.

I fully expected that the sight of so many idiotic creatures in a body would be exceedingly painful. It certainly was painful; but far less so than I could possibly have imagined. Contrary to my anticipation they were all clean, and neat, and tidy in their dress. Moreover, the majority of them exhibited an activity of body and a cheerfulness of expression which I had never before witnessed in persons so manifestly deficient in mental power. This deficiency was strongly marked in every face. The manifestations are very similar in all cases,—a deformed head or jaw, a wide loose mouth showing the gums, large irregular teeth, a fixed stare, and an imbecile smile that comes and goes in a mechanical manner. These peculiarities told plainly that the persons I saw before me were idiotic; but their manner and bearing conveyed no idea of their being useless and helpless.

The kindly system of the institution had done its work. Many of these poor creatures, when they were first brought to Earlswood, were in a condition inferior almost to the brutes. They were confirmed in filthy habits; they were at times perfectly torpid and completely insensible. All the gates of their understanding were as firmly locked as if they had been sealed by the hand of

death. They had ears and could not hear; eyes and could not see; tongues and could not speak. And now, here on this lawn, were these self-same creatures, all more or less awakened to life and understanding, running and leaping, laughing and chatting, asking and answering questions, and contending with each other in a high spirit of emulation in all kinds of games, while the workshops, the garden, and the farm offered a hundred specimens of their work in almost every department of art and industry.

The Rev. Edwin Sidney, a benevolent clergyman, who takes a deep interest in this institution, and who is one of its chief benefactors, has given a most interesting account, from observations made at various periods since the year 1859, of the working of the system, and of the progress made by the various inmates. In the course of his visits, Mr Sidney has been enabled to watch the treatment of idiots from the first day of their admission into the asylum until, in some instances, they have been rendered fit to mix in society. The system pursued by Dr Down, the resident physician and superintendent, resembles, in some degree, the graduated process by which the raw produce of nature is slowly and patiently converted into works of art and usefulness—with this differ-

ence, that the human raw material is never treated roughly, but always tenderly and gently.

On the reception of a pupil, the first step is to inquire from friends the history of the case, and to discover the peculiar predilections and repugnances of the individual. Certain objective facts, as weight, height, shape, conditions of the organs of sense, and powers of prehension and locomotion, are carefully registered. Then follow personal observation and comparison of habits and propensities with the accounts received from friends. These are the data for treatment, and instructions in accordance with them are given to the attendant or nurse. The first efforts are directed to the eradication of bad habits, such as tearing the clothes and wallowing in the dirt. After this, if there exist sufficient power, the pupil has proposed to him, occupations: such as unravelling cocoa fibre for matting, splitting rods for baskets, and the result of his labour, whatever it may be, is always received with praise instead of blame.

When the pupil is indolent, morose, or stubborn, the example of good fellow-pupils is tried, and the imitation of their conduct is encouraged. If he prove incapable from low physical power, the physician's skill is exercised on diet, attention to the condition of the skin, and due medical

treatment. The physical state is held to be of the greatest importance, and the appliance of gymnastic exercises is regulated by it. These exercises are first to the upper extremities, and then to the lower and the trunk ; and the lessons are enlivened by music.

From the examination of many hundred cases, Dr Down has found that a malformation of the mouth and the palate is a physical characteristic of nearly all idiots. It is not surprising, therefore, that many of them are mute, semi-mute, or indistinct in utterance. But even the worst of such cases are successfully treated at Earlswood. The method pursued is curious. For example, if the sounds to be caught were those of the letter T, the teacher would first hold up a *top*, which the pupils are made to name collectively ; then a *letter*, and lastly a *pot*. In the same manner for D, he would show pictures of a *dog*, a *ladder*, and some object coloured *red*. Hence, when a learner can name every object in the collection, he is able to utter the required words correctly. The result has been that many who could scarcely articulate a sound, can now speak intelligibly and with tolerable correctness. Pictures play an important part in conveying ideas to the pupils, and many of them have learned all they know from pictures.



Some of them, who are incapable of reading and writing, have become expert draughtsmen, as may be seen from various specimens of their artistic works which adorn the walls of the Asylum.

Another ingenious mode of conveying instruction, is by engaging the pupils in playing at shop-keeping. A counter is set out with various articles in daily use, at which a boy presides as shopkeeper, while the others come forward in turn and act as buyers. "It is most curious," says Mr Sidney, "to see what a puzzle it often is to find the correct weight; when it is found, the class is well questioned upon it, and, indeed, on every other weight the shopman touches, before it is put into the scale. Then there is further perplexity in getting the correct quantity of the required substance, as, for instance, sugar, into the scale. When the quantity is large, they will often begin with little spoonfuls, and when, at last, the balance approaches, it is sometimes a thorough poser whether they are to remove some of the commodity or to add to it. All this causes a regular excitement till the due proportions are achieved; and then comes the moment of pay, which is one of great excitement, the whole class trying to check every step in the reckoning. Combinations of pence and halfpence are trying

things to get over; and sometimes the purchaser who cannot calculate them uses cunning, and tries to pay with a silver coin, and asks for change, thus throwing his perplexities on the shopman."

The Asylum is at once a hospital, a school, and a workshop within; without, a gymnasium, a garden, and a farm. In the workshops the inmates practise tailoring, shoemaking, carpentering, mat-making, and the like. The clothes of the inmates and the attendants are nearly all made by imbeciles, who have learned their trades in the Asylum. They all take a great interest in their work, and are very proud of the results. Some of the lads act as cooks. On a visit to the kitchen, Mr Sidney found twelve of the pupils, not one of whom, a year previously, could have been trusted near an oven or a fire, neatly dressed in white, helping the regular officials of the kitchen with the greatest order and zeal. One poor fellow acted as scullery-boy, and to show how completely his heart was in his humble occupation, on being asked which he liked best, Earlswood or the establishment where he had previously been, he answered, "O Earlswood great deal;" and on being further questioned "Why?" added, "Because we have a bigger sink." It should be observed, that the pupils are not forced to engage

in occupations which they do not like. Each one is allowed to choose the employment for which he has a fancy. Some of them occupy themselves in drawing, and in making models and toys, simply for their own amusement. One of these, a youth of sixteen, has completed a most beautiful model of a frigate fully equipped and rigged with every rope, sail, and spar. The model is of considerable size, and is executed with marvellous neatness and skill. I was informed that the constructor had never seen a ship, and took his first notion from a picture on a pocket-handkerchief, being afterwards assisted by drawings in the Illustrated London News. In the progress of his work, he made a great discovery, namely, that boiling wood rendered it capable of being easily bent. He had never heard of this process, so that the discovery was really his own. With the permission of Dr Down, this pupil took me to his room to show me the model. His articulation was so imperfect, and his vocabulary so limited, that I could scarcely understand a word he said. He was, I was assured, a true idiot, who could scarcely read or write; yet he could draw admirably, and had made this wonderful ship. Though he could measure well, as his work testified, he had no idea of figures, or of

money. I asked him how much the ship had cost him. He said, "Three thousand pounds."

The girls' side of the Asylum comprises, besides the dining-hall and dormitories, a sewing school, and a play-room. In the school the girls are taught to read by the aid of large letters chalked on black boards; they are also employed in useful work; in the afternoon they are allowed to make the fancy articles which may be seen exhibited in the reception-room. In another apartment there is a baby class taught entirely by pictures. In these rooms are stands of flowers and ferns prettily arranged, rendering the place cheerful and attractive. Some of the girls have learned to read and write very well.

The farm, situated at the end of the garden, gives regular employment to twelve of the inmates, and in hay and harvest time brings others from the workshops, who profit greatly by the change. Strolling into the yard, I met one of the idiot farmers dressed in a smock-frock and a wide-awake hat. He certainly did not look more idiotic than some farm servants, not supposed to be deficient in mental capacity, whom I had seen outside the Asylum gates. He took me to the cow-house and showed me the cows. There were twenty of them, all in good condition,

and well provided with straw, and over each stall their attendant had placed a label bearing the cow's name in highly ornamental text. The lad who accompanied me was a good farmer ; but a perfect idiot. He could not count the pigs in a sty, though there were barely a dozen of them ; but he was a most useful member of the establishment for all that. He spoke very imperfectly. I asked him if he were happy there. He said, " Yes, very happy, but no money." I asked him what he would do with money if he had any. He said, " Buy sweet-stuff." A friend came to see him, and he gave the friend particular instructions to send him a seed cake. The farm supplies the establishment with the whole of the milk and butter consumed by the inmates of the Asylum.

Amusement enters largely into the system pursued by Dr Down. Besides the daily sports on the lawn and in the gymnasium, a theatrical performance is given at Christmas, and a fête at Midsummer. The charade performances have proved highly successful in stimulating into lasting vigour several whom it had been previously impossible to arouse from idiotic depression and apathy. The leading parts are sustained by inmates, assisted by the attendants ; the scenery is

painted by a youth who, though an excellent artist, is incapable of describing his work intelligibly, or of referring to it except in a jumble of incoherent words. All the woodwork is done by boys in the carpenter's shop. In all these amusements the pupils have the hearty assistance of Dr Down and Mrs Down, who are regarded by all in the establishment with the strongest affection.

I saw many unmistakable evidences of the regard in which the doctor is held, during my visit. Wherever he appeared on the grounds, the boys and girls ran to him, to talk to him, to ask him questions, and to fondle him. The men and women attendants, too, seemed to be all favourites with the poor imbeciles. I observed no indication that any of them inspired fear. I saw one man humour a tiresome boy with the utmost patience for fully half an hour, and in the end he succeeded in diverting him from the absurd desire he wished to gratify. I do not know upon what principle the attendants are chosen, but I noticed that they were all "good-looking," which suggests the theory that good looks and a kind disposition generally go together.

The inmates all like the place. Some of them who have gone home for a few weeks have expressed a desire to return to Earlswood and their

friend Dr Down before the expiration of their leave. One boy actually packed up and walked to the Asylum, saying he could not stay away from "home" any longer. Seeing how they were surrounded by every comfort, and indulged in every way, I could not feel surprised at this; but considering the labour and patience required of those who are employed to watch and tend them, I certainly was not prepared for the statement of one of the female attendants—that she was very happy at Earlswood, that she had been there three years, and that she should not like to go to another place.

It was on the fête-day that I visited Earlswood—a day long and anxiously looked forward to by all the inmates. The amusements on the lawn continued from one o'clock until dusk, consisting of cricket, croquet, Aunt Sally, racing and jumping matches, a performance of Punch and Judy, glees by the singing class, negro melodies by the Earlswood Troupe, and the ascent of a fire balloon. Under the influence of the emulation excited by the racing and jumping for prizes, ranging from a shilling to a penny, the idiotic expression vanished from the faces of the patients in a magical way.

In several instances I found it difficult to say

whether they were idiots or not. One lad achieved some astonishing feats in bar-jumping, trying again and again until he had accomplished his purpose. I was informed that this boy, when he first entered the Asylum, was incapable of any physical effort whatever. His energies, both mental and physical, had been roused chiefly by gymnastic exercises. In the sports, I noticed that Dr Down and the attendants joined on equal terms with the patients, and thus set them all perfectly at their ease. The only refractory subject was a fat boy, whose accomplishments consisted in standing on his head, and in the execution of a dance in frog fashion, which he was ready to perform any number of times on the slightest encouragement. The fat boy's idiosyncrasy was to be always out of humour and always grumbling. He was last in all the races, but would insist upon a prize. In the pole-climbing he had to be hoisted up on the shoulders of an attendant. When the attendant dropped him, he came forward to the doctor in a triumphant manner, and held out his hand for a prize. In every case he had one. They were all extremely fond of money, but the amount was of no consequence. They were just as well pleased with a penny as with a shilling.



The results of the system pursued at Earlswood are very great, very astonishing. Are they desirable? Is it incumbent upon those who have the charge of idiots, to do the utmost to rouse their dormant faculties and restore the broken and defaced image to the likeness of Him who made it? If these questions are to be answered in the affirmative, to do anything less than is done at Earlswood would be to fail in a great and sacred duty. Dr Down's system is purely one of kindness, and it was not long before I perceived that his uniform and scrupulous kindness, his minute attention to every case, his liberal employment of every means calculated to divert the mind and promote the health of the body, were the true causes of the great expense of which some persons have complained.

There is no doubt that the inmates of Earlswood might be kept and maintained for considerably less money; but this could only be done by reducing the number of attendants, and the success attained, by dispensing with many sanitary precautions, by adopting mechanical restraints, and by otherwise limiting the comforts and enjoyments of the inmates. For example, I found in the grounds some twenty or thirty attendants going about among the patients, watching them

without appearing to watch them, laughing and chatting with them, joining in their sports, and taking infinite pains to divert their minds from the particular notions which possessed them. In the good old times, this was done by a third of the number of attendants; but then they saved labour and the money of the patrons by chaining the patients to their bedsteads, by strapping them to boards, and by beating them until they were insensible. A blow is a cheap and effective quieter, there is no doubt. Dirt, filth, and unwholesome food, are also cheap, but they are nasty too, and, I trust, wholly distasteful to the humane and the Christian feeling of the times in which we live.

Relatively, the expenses of Earlswood may be larger than absolutely necessary, but I was quite convinced from what I saw, that the system pursued by Dr Down could not be carried out without great liberality. The number of attendants; the various workshops, with all their fittings and appliances; the schools, the play-rooms, the works of art and ornament, the organized entertainments, the cheerful gardens, are all necessary and essential to the subtle process by which these poor idiots are coaxed, and petted, and insensibly led into developing their latent faculties, and assuming, as near as possible, the attributes of useful

and intelligent human beings. One item of expense may be reasonably objected to—that of the mere ornamental parts of such an edifice. It surely can never be necessary to burden a charitable institution with an enormous rent in the form of interest of capital, or an incubus in the much more depressing form of a heavy building-debt.

## AN EXHIBITION OF ASSES.

Of all the animals that came out of the ark, the donkey is the least considered by the master whom he serves so patiently and so well. The poor beast seems to have shared the curse with Ham, and to have been banned from the beginning. We may, without incurring the charge of irreverence, imagine that Noah had a great deal of trouble with him ; that he was the last to be got into the ark, and the last to be got out of it ; that while Shem ascended to the back of the stately elephant, and Japhet mounted the graceful horse, Ham bestrode the humble ass, and man and beast went forth into the wilderness together, to be slighted and despised.

Buffon and Cuvier both thought that the donkey was despised only because he cut a sorry figure by comparison with the horse, and that if the latter were unknown the donkey would have had great care lavished upon him, and thus have

increased in size and developed his mental powers to an extent almost impossible to imagine. Adopting this theory, we must regard the donkey as the victim of an invidious and odious comparison. But with all respect for Buffon and Cuvier, I am inclined to think that there are other causes for the contempt which attaches to this animal. At the very outset of his career he laboured under the great disadvantage of not being "good-looking." We all know how a defect of this kind affects even the destiny of man. Hunchbacks, and cripples, and misshapen persons are not, as a rule, the special pets of society, but rather the contrary.

Natural disposition, too, is a most important element in the account. By nature the donkey is humble and patient, susceptible of strong attachments, and contented with the smallest of mercies, and for this reason he is "put upon." It is the same with the human animal. When a man is patient, and humble, and contented with little, he is almost invariably the butt and the drudge of others. Every one is acquainted with some big-headed, ungainly, meek, easy-tempered human donkey, who runs errands, lends money, amuses children, hangs pictures, sees old maids home, sleeps on the shake-down, goes outside the

omnibus in the rain to oblige a lady, and generally does everything he is asked to do by his sharper and more selfish neighbours. This is pure good nature, but clever people who profit by it call it, in the fulness of their gratitude, stupidity. The meek and mild character always invites contumely and ill usage. If the horse commands more respect than the donkey, it is not because his character is more amiable, but because he inspires more fear. Thus the world will always have a higher opinion of the ruthless warrior who conquers with sword and flame, than of the mild apostle of peace who goes about quietly and unobtrusively seeking to do good.

But the donkey has a physical defect—a defect which is never forgotten in either man or beast. He is little. To be meek of mind and short of stature is a terrible combination of misfortunes. It is a hard thing even for a great mind to maintain its true importance and dignity in a small body. The great Napoleon did not escape the reproach of being little. If you want to take him down a peg in your imagination, think of him as the “Little Corporal,” or even as the little man in imperial robes, who pulled his favourites’ ears at Fontainebleau. We had a re-

markable illustration of the disadvantage of short stature the other day, when a beardless boy got up in the House of Commons, and ridiculed a veteran minister whose name is associated with the greatest reforms of modern times, by merely reminding the intelligent audience that he was barely five feet high.

I am sorry that my philosophy should have led me to use a cabinet minister as an illustration bearing upon the condition of the donkey race; but the analogy was obvious, and truth must be pursued sternly. I come, then, to the conclusion, that the low regard in which the donkey is held, and the insults and injuries which are heaped upon him, are owing to three causes—to his being meek, and patient, and easy-tempered; to his not being “good-looking;” and to his being little.

Considering how the ass has had, during his history, to bear up against one or other of his defects, it is really a marvel that the race has managed to survive to this day. His career from first to last has been a very chequered one indeed. There were periods in ancient times when he was regarded with some favour, and treated with some consideration; but at no period does he appear to have been entirely exempt

from reproach. In Jerusalem he was the favourite pony of the upper classes and the priests. Deborah describes the greatest men in Israel as those who rode upon white asses, and we are told that Abdon, a judge of Israel, had forty sons and thirty grandsons who rode on seventy asses. Nevertheless, those Israelites, although they were proud to ride on asses, considered them unclean beasts; and to yoke an ass with an ox in the same team was an offence against the law of Moses. The Persians, the Tartars, and the Romans, held the ass in high esteem, it is true, but only when he was cooked. Olearius affirms that he saw thirty-two wild asses slain in one day by the Shah of Persia and his court, and that the bodies were sent to the royal kitchen of Ispahan. Haunch of wild ass roasted was a favourite dish with the Roman epicures; but their maxim was, to say nothing good of an ass unless he was dead. They had no regard for him when alive, and thought it a very bad omen to meet one on the road. The Egyptians entertained a fierce hatred towards the ass, and regarded it as a symbol of all kinds of misfortune. They were the first to symbolize a stupid person by the head and ears of an ass.

When the Romans sought to bring contempt



upon the Jewish religion they trumped up a story about an ass's head having been found in the sanctuary of the Temple. It was a wicked story in every sense ; but the Jews were greatly annoyed at it. They would have forgiven anything but a *donkey's* head. Thus in every age and in every country the ass has been despised, and consequently ill used, on one score or another ; but for no other real reason, I take it, than that he is too patient and gentle of disposition, and too insignificant in size, to assert himself and command respect. The condition of an animal suffering from such undeserved misfortunes has high claims upon the active humanity of the present time ; and it was therefore but a matter of course that after the dogs and the horses, the donkeys should have an opportunity of forming themselves into a great exhibition at the Agricultural Hall.

The recent mule and donkey show may be regarded as the first competitive examination of the pupils of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Donkey-drivers, who had for years been receiving lessons in humanity from the officers of the society, came up to show what progress they had made in the art of persuading donkeys to do their work without the argument of the stick. Prevention has, no doubt,

done much, but it is reasonable to expect that encouragement will do more; for this show rewards, while the society only punishes.

One hundred and twenty-five animals were entered for the show, and though some of the most notable specimens were sent by distinguished personages, the great majority were the property of very *undistinguished* personages, viz. costermongers and chimney-sweeps. When it is remembered that the show continued for four days, during which time the exhibitors were deprived of the services of their animals, it will be readily understood that it was no easy matter to bring so many of them together. It was, of course, necessary to indemnify the owners of the donkeys for their loss of time; and in some instances to persuade them that the promoters of the show meant them no harm. But when this had been accomplished by the tact and energy of Mr Douglas, the manager, the costermongers entered into the affair heart and soul, and seemed to be quite alive to the humane object of the exhibition. The lower classes are usually rather suspicious of the patronage of great folks; but on this occasion they found the great folks and themselves, as regards mules and donkeys, on the same footing. The Prince of Wales and the

costermonger exhibited their donkeys side by side; and if the stall occupied by the prince's donkey was rather smarter in its appointments than some of the others, was not the stall occupied by the mules of Mr Tom Sayers quite as smart? And while the ass-cloth belonging to the prince was marked with three feathers and the letters P. W., were not the mule-cloths of Mr Sayers embroidered with the letters T. S., a garter, a lion rampant, and a figure of Mr Sayers himself, stripped to the waist, and standing in an attitude of self-defence? Princes, earls, prize-fighters, and costermongers were all, for this occasion at least, simply exhibitors of mules and donkeys.

The donkeys and mules exhibited by the "swells" were of course pets, who fared sumptuously every day, were regularly washed and cleaned and currycombed, and had never, perhaps, done a day's work in their lives. The prince's donkey Vicar, may have once tasted a thistle, as Brummel once tasted a pea, and as Lord Brougham once ate a fourpenny dinner in the New Cut. And he looked like a donkey who would say, with the view of making less fortunate donkeys contented with their position, that he never enjoyed anything so much in his life. He was evidently, however, a donkey who, as regards thistles, was

not permitted to indulge his predilection. It was to be expected that all the pets would look well, and they did; but it was not to be expected that some of the working-class donkeys, the "mokes" accustomed to drag fish and vegetables about the streets all day, and to be ridden within an inch of their lives on Hampstead Heath, should look equally as well. But they did.

Indeed, on the whole, I think the costermongers' donkeys were the handsomest in the show; and, judging from the sleekness of their coats and the soundness of their knees, they appeared to have been well taken care of and kindly treated. The affection which their masters lavished upon them in presence of the humane public was most delightful to witness. Great hulking fellows with beetle brows, bullet heads, and deeply scarred cheeks, were seen handling their donkeys with the greatest tenderness, gently smoothing their coats, patting them on the back, and even embracing and caressing them. Going round from stall to stall, and seeing affection welling so liberally from such unlikely fountains, I should not have been surprised if I had come upon the long-promised exhibition of the lion and the lamb reclining together on terms of the most perfect amity. Not an improper adjective, not

a sound of a blow to be heard ! Had Mr Douglas thrown some spell over those costers, or was it a dream of the good time coming ? In genteel accents, and in a tone of quiet philosophy, I heard two gentlemen, in the very narrowest of corduroys, the very wispiest of neckerchiefs, and the greasiest of caps, set upon heads displaying all the generally received developments, natural and accidental, of ferocity, thus conversing :

“ I should not wonder, William, if this here show would do a great deal of good in perventing cruelty to hanimals.”

To which William replied, “ I have no doubt of it, Joseph ; and it’s just the thing as is wanted, for the way in which some fellows treats the poor beastes is shameful ! ” And Joseph, as showing his reprobation of the conduct of such inhumanity, put his arms round his donkey’s neck and demonstratively embraced the animal. I concluded that William and Joseph were of those exemplary persons who, when they have donkeys that won’t go, disdain to proceed to the extremity of walloping, but, instead, give them some hay and some straw, and incite them to action by a mild “ Gee-up ! ”

It is worthy of remark that the donkeys were all in much better condition than their masters.

Regarding them both as pure beasts, any one desiring to possess a specimen, would have infinitely preferred the donkey to the man. But this, after all, was a compliment to the men, for they had lavished all their care upon their donkeys, and bestowed none upon themselves. Best clothes and clean faces had not been thought of. They came from their work "just as they were," and though there was a great show of linen, it was occasionally displayed in quarters where it is usual, in other society, to conceal it most scrupulously. This circumstance, together with the complete indifference to their own appearance manifested by nearly all the men, suggested to my mind that after the donkeys have had their turn, it would not be a bad thing to have a show of costermongers.

After witnessing so many evidences of care and kindness bestowed upon the poor donkey, it was most gratifying to me to be present at the distribution of prizes on the last day of the show. One by one, as their names were called out, the men entered the arena with their animals, and advanced to the table to receive their prizes. One carried off a silver cup of the value of ten guineas (which he declared would be many times filled and emptied, too, before the night was out);

another, a crisp new five-pound note, which he handled not exactly in the manner of a bank-clerk ; a third, four golden sovereigns ; a fourth, two pound ten, looking quite an enormous sum in virtue of its being partly in silver and wrapped up in brown paper ; a fifth, one pound, and so on, down to five shillings. I should not omit to mention, that one of the donkeys that received a prize was forty years old. For the best part of that time it had worked hard, brought up a large family, and never once been chargeable to the parish. At an agricultural show in Bucks, that donkey might compete with any old man in the county. By the way, the extreme age of this animal—looking none the worse for its years—suggested to me that the reason why no one ever sees a dead donkey, may be that they never die, but survive from generation to generation.

Without being very demonstrative in their politeness—it is not easy to touch your hat when you are holding a donkey with one hand, and two pound ten, partly in silver, with the other—the costermongers all seemed perfectly satisfied with their prizes, and cheered right heartily again and again when the chairman mentioned the name of an excellent lady—there present—who had been

one of the most active and generous promoters of the show.

So far, the exhibition was in all respects highly gratifying, both as an evidence of good that had been attained, and as a promise of greater good to be attained in the future. But unfortunately for my favourable impressions, I lingered for some time in the Hall, and witnessed the grand finale—which was an exhibition of donkey-racing. The proverbial rule of the donkey race-course is, that the hindmost wins; but that was not the rule on the present occasion. A heavy, long-legged costermonger, and a great hulking sweep, got upon two poor animals, much too small to carry them, and endeavoured to urge them round the ring by tugging at their mouths, and kicking them in the ribs with their heavy hobnailed boots. The managers of the show had considerably forbidden the owners of the donkeys to bring sticks or whips with them; but the donkeys enjoyed no exemption from blows on that account. As they were unwillingly urged round the arena, they were poked with umbrellas, and banged with walking-sticks by every one of the spectators who could get within reach of them. I will say nothing harsher of the racing than that it was an error of judgment. If the show had



been got up purely with a view to profit, the manager would have had his justification. He could have pointed to the crowds who rushed into the Hall at four o'clock on purpose to see the races. They would not come before to inspect the donkeys in their stalls, and take stock of the results of the teaching of humanity. They would only pay their shillings to be amused—to see animals driven against their will, and used against their nature. Yes, “used against their nature.” In this one sentence is contained the whole objection to donkey-racing.

The animal was not intended to be a racer. He is not adapted for it. It is not “his nature to.” One does not need to be an “eminent naturalist” to discover this. The fact is patent to the most ordinary observation. The donkey has a large head, and a large body upon very slim and somewhat short legs. It is evident that those legs were not intended to carry that heavy, unwieldy body along at a rapid rate. It is obvious, too, that his foot was not designed so much for speed, as to enable him to tread securely. The hoof in its natural state is furnished with extremely sharp rims, leaving a hollow in the centre, and this provision is manifestly designed to fit him for travelling on slippery ground, and for as-

cending the precipitous sides of hills. In fact, the donkey is a beast of burden for the mountain, as the camel is for the sandy desert, the elephant for the jungle, and the horse for the level plain. The donkey is constantly protesting against man's misuse of him. If he could speak, he would say plainly "I am not a racer," but, as he can't speak, he does the best he can to convey his meaning to his insensible master. When he is urged too fast, he obstinately holds back and kicks; when he is laden too heavily, he lies down; but if well fed and well treated, he will always do the work he is fitted for. He will carry a reasonable burden without a murmur, and he will trudge on for miles over the roughest roads patiently and steadily, without showing any signs of fatigue. At future donkey-shows—and I hope there will be one every year—there must be no racing, even to please the sensation-hunters.

From what I saw at the Agricultural Hall, I had reason to believe that costermongers' donkeys were better treated than was generally supposed. But thinking it probable that only the best specimens had been chosen for exhibition, I determined to pursue my researches in quarters where the masters of the donkeys were not under the eye of ladies and gentlemen of the Humane Society.

With this purpose I went down to Billingsgate at six o'clock in the morning, when the costermongers were arriving in their donkey-trucks for their supply of fish ; and afterwards visited the New Cattle Market at Islington, where, every Friday afternoon, large numbers of horses and donkeys of the humblest class are exposed for sale. At Billingsgate, I saw from forty to fifty donkeys. I saw them arrive with their empty trucks, and I waited to see them depart with their loads ; but, in the course of two hours, I did not notice a single case in which a donkey was ill treated. On the contrary, they seemed to be used with great kindness and consideration. The first thing the costermongers did on jumping out of their trucks was to relieve the donkeys of their bridles, and set baskets of food before them ; and generally, when they came up from the market with instalments of their loads, they stirred up the chaff and beans in the baskets, to enable the animals to finish their breakfasts comfortably. I did not observe that any of the trucks or carts were overloaded ; but fish was scarce and dear in the market that morning. Perhaps, if the costermongers could have afforded to buy a larger stock, they would not have been so considerate of their beasts. However, as the song says, let us speak

of a man as we find him. I must say that on this occasion the costermonger behaved to his donkey in the most exemplary manner ; and if I had gone to Billingsgate with the hope and desire of witnessing cruelty to the animal, I should have had to come away bitterly disappointed.

I think I *was* a little disappointed ; for it was in some such terms as these that I addressed an active and intelligent officer of the City Police, whom I met in the vicinity of London's column :

"How is it that the costermongers all treat their donkeys so well?"

To which the active and intelligent officer replied :

"'Cos it's their interest, sir ; they would be fools to ill treat their best friend."

"But they *do* ill treat them *sometimes*," I said, pursuing my disappointment.

"Yes," was the reply, "when they are drunk ; but when they are drunk they ill treat their wives, and they would ill treat you, or even me."

This coincides with the information which I received from an officer of the Humane Society, who told me that donkeys came to grief chiefly when their masters were drunk, and when they were handed over to the tender mercies of persons who had no interest in them.

“On Hampstead Heath, Blackheath, and at sea-side places,” said my informant, “donkeys are used shamefully, even by their proprietors; they can make more by them in a day than they are worth, and they don’t mind killing them.”

The pursuit of pleasure is generally thoughtless and ruthless. Have you not seen a sixteen-stone materfamilias, with her whole family of daughters, ruthlessly riding as many donkeys to death on Hampstead Heath, utterly regardless of their sufferings? Inexorable trade is not so inexorable after all, even when personified in the “ruffian costermonger.”

On the Friday afternoon, when I visited the New Cattle Market, there were possibly a hundred donkeys, and twice that number of horses, exposed for sale in the pens running along the lower side of the great square. It was a strange scene. The ground for fully a quarter of a mile was occupied by a dense throng of horses, donkeys, mules, goats, men, boys, and dogs, all kicking, galloping, braying, bleating, shouting, shrieking, and barking together; while strewed along the stones among the never-ceasing tramp of feet, were exposed for sale every imaginable article appertaining to the cart-shed and the stable, with an infinite variety of articles not ap-

pertaining to either in the most distant degree. There were saddles, bridles, traces, buckles, belly-bands, wheels, axle-trees, iron tires, currycombs, brushes, splash-boards, tail-boards, and broken shafts, and among these, in the most promiscuous confusion, iron bedsteads, teacups, coffee-pots, spades, rakes, books, pictures, cradles, cheese-cutters, canisters, chemists' bottles, pomatum, maps, lanterns, and literally thousands of other articles besides. It was as if a fleet of ships, carrying the contents of all the marine-store-shops of London, had been wrecked there, and the sea had receded, leaving their scattered cargoes high and dry. Along this wreck-littered shore, deafened by the bawling of loud harsh voices, calling, winkles, ginger-beer, sherbet, pineapple rock, fruit, fried fish, and every imaginable vile eatable and drinkable; through an atmosphere steaming with the exhalations of mangy animals, and reeking with the odour of fermenting humanity, for the most part clad in fustian and corduroy, I made my way to the place where the donkeys are "shown off" to intending purchasers. Here, surely, was the place to be harrowed by the spectacle of cruelty to animals.

The first thing I noticed reminded me of a good story I once heard of fifteen economical

gentlemen, who proposed to go out for a day's pleasure in a vehicle drawn by one horse. Though there were fifteen of them, they were desirous of adding one more to the number, and accordingly Mr Abrahams, who was the promoter of the affair, invited his friend, Mr Jobson, to join the party.

"What, sixteen people, and only one horse!" exclaimed Mr Jobson; "the animal can't do it; he'll never go."

"Oh, never fear about that," said Mr Abrahams; "we'll make him go—we shall all have whips."

The costermongers and stable-men attending this fair were so far like the fifteen economical gentlemen, that they all had sticks; or, if there were any who hadn't, they had every opportunity of providing themselves with the article, as half a dozen fellows were continually elbowing through the throng with bundles of ash saplings under their arms, calling out, "Real stingers, only a penny!" Now, I cannot declare that I witnessed any actual cruelty of a savage or aggravated character inflicted upon the donkeys; but at the same time I am bound to say that the "stingers" were used very freely. But it was evidently more from habit, than from any intention of hurting the beasts. Whenever a costermonger wished to

give vent to his feelings, whatever those feelings might be, he came down with a whack on a donkey's back. If he was angered, it was "whack ;" if he was pleased it was "whack ;" if he meant to signify his approval of a good thing, it was "whack ;" if he meant to signify his disapproval of a bad thing, it was "whack ;" if he meant nothing at all, it was "whack !" Always "whack !"

And no man was at all particular as to the donkey he marked his emphasis upon. If it were his own donkey, well and good ; if it were his neighbour's donkey, well and good. Indeed, they seemed to be all very grateful to anybody who gave their donkeys whacks, and even adjured you to give them whacks, if you were not disposed to do so of your own accord. It seemed to give especial gratification to the boys, who could not afford to buy "stingers," to go up the line of donkeys, and give them all whacks on the ribs with their open hands ; and the proprietors appeared to think that the boys were appreciative, and were showing their animals a kindness. The donkeys did not mind all this whacking much ; or, at least, they did not appear to mind it ; but, I should say, for much the same reason that the eels are said not to mind being skinned. A costermonger will tell you that a donkey does not feel



these blows ; and that is possibly true when the donkey has seen several years of hard labour. With constant whacking his hide becomes tanned into hard leather on his back. Feel his side and his haunches, and you will find the sinews and the skin beaten and welded into a thick, corded, insensible, armour-plate. When the donkey has been hammered into this state, he does not feel blows very keenly ; but in his youth his skin and flesh are as tender as those of any other animal, and every blow is torture to him. The costermongers do not consider this ; but I believe if they were led to consider it, they would soon see both the policy and the humanity of moderating the use of the stick. It is unfortunately an article of the costermonger's creed that the donkey is an animal that will stand a great deal of beating ; it is another article of his creed—and this exhausts the whole code of his religion—that a donkey is a racing animal, that ought to be made to do from eight to ten miles an hour. It should be the object of future shows at the Agricultural Hall to prove to him that he labours under a gross error ; and to convince him that the donkey is as keenly sensitive to pain as any other animal, and that it is designed by nature not for a racer, but for a patient, steady-going, sure-footed beast of burden.

## THE WORLD BEHIND THE SCENES.

WHEN our ancestors by Act of Parliament declared actors and stage players to be "rogues and vagabonds," it was no doubt in the idea that all such persons led an idle, dissolute, and wandering life. Idleness, however, was what was chiefly insisted upon in connection with the occupation of play-acting. The player was looked upon as a lazy, good-for-nothing fellow, who did not like real work, and who, consequently, turned actor, that he might indulge his indolent disposition. It was supposed, when he strutted and fretted in the high-heeled sock, or shuffled through some pantomimic comicality in the low-heeled buskin, that he was amusing himself as much as he amused the audience. He liked the occupation because it was play, not work. This was the notion, not only of those who objected to the stage, but also of many thoughtless play-goers who never troubled themselves to reflect upon the trials and sorrows of an actor's life.

But actors are no longer rogues and vagabonds by Act of Parliament; they no longer wander about the country and play in sheds and barns; and when they die, are no longer denied Christian burial. Still the rogue and vagabond notion largely prevails in the public mind. Very few persons who frequent the theatres have any real notion of what an actor's life really is. The stage-struck youth who invests all his spare shillings in "half-price to the pit," draws invidious comparison between his own occupation in the shop or counting-house and that of the favourite actor with whose powers he is so much smitten. How *he* would like to be an actor, and do all those funny things in the farce! How much more pleasant than casting up columns of figures, or serving silks and calicoes! How delightful to be able to get up at what hour you like in the morning; to have no horrid office to go to; to have no master to scold or bully you; to have nothing to do all day, and then to be the admired of all admirers for a few bright hours at night!

The stage-struck youth's view of an actor's life is pretty generally shared in by play-goers of a larger growth. Paterfamilias, who has heard that Mr Thespis Brown gets his twenty or thirty pounds a week, reflects bitterly upon the four or

five hundred a year, which is all his reward for toiling from morning till night in a dingy office in the city. Mr Thespis Brown gets three times as much merely for playing—for doing nothing! When Paterfamilias is toiling in the City, Mr Thespis Brown is walking about enjoying himself. He has only to put forth a little exertion in the evening when the time comes for amusement and gaiety.

It is our object in this paper to disabuse the minds of all thoughtless play-goers of this absurd notion; and if such persons will only accompany us behind the scenes of an actor's daily life, we think we shall succeed in doing so.

First, then, as to the mere effort of playing, which seems so easy and so pleasant. A popular actor has often to perform in three pieces a night; or, what is equally arduous, in one long piece, which lasts the greater part of the evening. In either case he has to arrive at the theatre by half-past six. His work begins full half an hour before the rising of the curtain. One of the first unpleasant things he has to do—and particularly unpleasant at that hour of the day—is to shave himself; or, as is more frequently the case, to submit himself to be shaved by another. Now as an actor must not wear whiskers, nor even a mous-

tache, he has a great deal of cheek and chin to shave, and consequently in his case the area of torture is enlarged beyond the ordinary limits.

But the disagreeable operation is necessary even if it should have already been performed at the natural shaving hour. This is an axiom of the dressing-room—"The human face will not take paint until it is shaved." We might add another—"The human face will not take paint until it is washed." So, to begin with, the actor has to shave and wash. Then he has to denude himself of the garments of every-day life—even to the very shirt—and indue himself in other garments, which in too many cases have been worn by others, and are, in general, hot, stuffy, and uncomfortable. This done, he proceeds to paint his face, or to have his face painted for him by a dresser.

Now there are some things about making up the face which are the most distressing which can happen to a man who possesses any sense of dignity, or entertains any respect for his person. To be floured with a powder-puff is pleasant enough; there is nothing very objectionable in having rouge put on your cheeks with a hare's foot; you may even submit with patience to be wrinkled with Indian ink; but what do you imagine are

the feelings of a man when his nose (with the view of having a piece of pink cotton wool stuck upon it) is being daubed over with melted glue, as if it were the leg of a stool or the knob of a drawer! Imagine the process going still further, and the contents of the glue pot being smeared over your eyebrows, in order to secure the adhesion of two tufts of crape hair. Nothing but actual experience could give you any conception of the delightful sensation which ensues when the glue becomes dry, and you can neither shut your mouth nor wink your eyes. If we had an enemy, and were vindictive, we should desire nothing better than to stand over him and taunt him with his degraded condition when he is putting glue on his nose. Pulling that organ, punching it, tweaking it, are nothing—nothing to gluing it!

And now for the wig—that nasty, greasy, stuffy thing, that smells so of earth, and death, and mould. Mr Clarkson may tell you that it is new and has never been worn; but you know better. There is the mark of a head inside it. Whose head? whose hair? Still, on it must go, and before the actor has adjusted it to his satisfaction, the call-boy is at the dressing-room door with “Mr Thespis Brown called.” And away Mr Thespis rushes, down-stairs, or up, as the case may be,

and plunges upon the stage without having a moment to collect his scattered thoughts.

Nothing seems so easy or so natural as a well-sustained conversation on the stage. It is just what we do in ordinary life. But then let any one imagine having to repeat night after night the same words with the same looks and gestures. This is a very different thing. An answer to a speech on the stage is not suggested by the speech itself, but by the last few words of it, viz. the "*cue*." The actor has to watch for this cue; to fill up the time naturally, until it comes, and then to strike in with the right response. This is to a great extent a mechanical process—a process, too, which is a constant drag upon the natural impulses of the actors. The taking up of cues at the right moment, and the regulation of action, gesture, and position are all going on simultaneously with the act of expression and embodiment. Don't for a moment imagine, my good sir, that that popular favourite in petticoats is marking, and making a note of, your handsome face in the stalls while she is going through her part. She doesn't see *you*, or anybody else. Her mind is too much on the stretch to do anything but attend to the business of the scene. There are very few actors who ever get rid of a feeling

of nervousness while they are before the public. With most of them the enactment of a part is an exciting, exhausting ordeal, which nothing but the applause of the public enables them to go through. We believe that the surest way to kill an actor would be for his audiences to conspire for a night or two not to applaud him. Applause is the food upon which he lives. If it were withheld for any length of time he would sink from sheer exhaustion.

The very smallest farce entails real work upon those who take a prominent part in it; but when an actor plays in three pieces during the evening, the labour he has to undergo multiplies upon him in a manner that is little suspected by those who see him only on the stage. We will suppose that Mr Thespis Brown has played that part, for the proper embodiment of which he glued his nose and his eyebrows. Well; the curtain no sooner falls than he rushes away to his room to dress for the next piece.

But before he dresses he has to *undress*. It is a comparatively easy matter to toss off a wig, while he is tossing off a glass of barley water—and there is no great difficulty in getting rid of a coat, waistcoat, and pantaloons—mayhap a doublet and hose—but it is by no means so simple



or agreeable a task to take off a cotton wool nose, and a pair of crape hair eyebrows. Glue is a very adhesive substance, and when dry is very obstinate, and if without the aid of warm water you attempt to take off a false nose stuck on by its agency, the probability is that you will tear off a portion of the real nose with it. So Mr Thespis Brown has to soak his nose and eyebrows in hot water and then scrape them! Again he has to powder and paint his face—possibly this time to glue on a moustache—again to put on a wig, and get into a suit of uncomfortable clothes, and once more, by the time he is dressed, the inexorable call-boy is at the door with—"Mr Thespis Brown called." A second time the actor, in a new character, with new words to speak, and new action to follow out, appears before the delighted public. How little do we think of the hurried and uncomfortable process of making-up to which he has been submitting himself in his dressing-room during the short wait between the pieces! Imagine all this repeated a third time! If any one fancies that it is light, pleasant work, let him call upon Mr Thespis Brown any night about half-past eleven and see him in his dressing-room. There he sits, panting and exhausted, like an animal that has been hunted, submitting

himself helplessly to the hands of his dresser. On the chairs around will be seen three sets of under-clothing, shirts, &c., all wet through, as if they had just come out of the washing-tub. They have come off the actor's back ! And now for the fourth time he has to make a change, and indue himself in the garments of private life. What, think you, is an actor fit for after all this work ? You go home after the play and enjoy your supper, and possibly sit up for an hour or two talking over the pleasures of the evening. The man who has been amusing you is "dead-beat," and rolls into bed the moment he can reach his home.

"Ah ! but next morning he can lie to what hour he likes ; and then he has all the rest of the day to enjoy himself."

Well, considering that at night he works as hard as any paviour or excavator for six consecutive hours, he would be fairly entitled to ease and leisure during the day. But it is very seldom indeed that he can calculate upon any such indulgence. In country theatres, where the pieces are changed two or three times a week, the actor must work both night and day. It is quite a common occurrence for a country actor on coming off the stage at midnight to receive a new part of

twenty or thirty lengths, which he is required to study and learn before the following evening. A rehearsal of the piece is called at eleven o'clock in the morning, and by that time he must have mastered the words and business. There is nothing for it but to sit up all night and study ; and then, when he has snatched an hour or two's sleep, he must hurry off to the theatre to rehearse.

In London, where the pieces are not changed so frequently, and where the average run of a drama is from thirty to sixty nights, the work is not so heavy ; but still it is far heavier than the public have any idea of. Although a piece may run for weeks, and even months, the manager finds it necessary to have something new in preparation in case of a sudden falling off in his business. It often happens that the moment a new piece is launched another is immediately put in rehearsal ; and not unfrequently this second piece, after it has been rehearsed for perhaps a fortnight, is through some accident or necessity withdrawn to make room for a third.

Here, then, is heavy day work for the actor—to say nothing of the ever-recurring rehearsal of farces and interludes. But even if there were no such things as rehearsals, and plays could be acted without any preparation whatever, the actor

must still walk about town with a heavy log of responsibility dragging at his heels. It would not cause a vast amount of inconvenience if a shop or an office were not opened at ten in the morning ; but the curtain of a theatre must rise at seven precisely, or the public will insist on knowing the reason why not. So it is necessary that the actor should arrive at the theatre " punctual to his time." The dread of being late is constantly haunting him ; and for this reason he is afraid to take a little run out of town, to sit down to a late dinner, or to engage in any absorbing amusement as the time for the opening of the theatre approaches. It is necessary, also, that an actor should be within call in case of any sudden necessity for altering the night's programme. This entails upon all actors the duty of looking at the bills regularly every morning as soon as they are published. It will not save an actor from being fined if he protest that he looked at the announcements in the newspapers. The manager will sternly reply—

" Sir, it is your duty to look at the bills of the theatre."

Rehearsing is very tedious, wearisome, and vexatious work. Let us peep into the Theatre Royal —, where they are now preparing a great

sensation drama. The piece has been read by the author, and the actors and actresses are assembled on the stage to compare parts. This is the first step of the process. The actors simply read over their parts one with another, to see that they have been correctly copied. This is a very necessary preliminary, as the copying of parts is a task of some difficulty, and is rarely performed with complete accuracy. Each part contains only the words spoken by the actor to whom it belongs, and the "cues" of his interlocutors. The parts are copied in the following manner :—

" ——— lamented, long-lost Box ?"

" I am."

" ——— cruelly deceived."

" Ha ! then you are Cox ?"

" ——— I am."

" I heard of it. I congratulate you—I give you joy ! And now I think I'll go and take a stroll."

" ——— your intended !"

" My intended ! You mean your intended."

" ——— yours !"

" How can she be my intended now that I am drowned ?"

This is a passage from Mr Box's part. The same passage in the part of Mr Cox would run thus :—

"——— And Ramsgate."

"It must be she! And you, sir, you are Box—the lamented, long-lost Box?"

"——— I am."

"And I was about to marry the interesting creature you so cruelly deceived."

"——— you are Cox?"

"I am."

"——— take a stroll."

"No, you don't! I'll not lose sight of you till I've restored you to the arms of your intended."

"——— your intended."

"No, sir, yours."

"——— I am drowned."

"You're no such thing, sir; and I prefer presenting you to Penelope Ann."

The few words at the end of the lines are what are called the "cues;" and occasionally, when an actor has not heard the piece read, these cue words and his replies to them are his only guide to what it is all about.\*

\* The system of reading a piece in the green-room, and then giving out the parts with only cues to guide the actor to the sense of the context, is certainly a bad one. Actors do not listen to the piece as a whole when it is read to them; they are intent only on following the parts which they imagine are intended for themselves. The consequence is that they rarely know what the piece is about, even after they have played in it for a hundred nights.

The rehearsal of even a short farce like "Box and Cox" will occupy at least a week; but a drama in three or four acts will require the attendance of "all concerned" every day for three weeks or a month. The rehearsal of an important piece generally commences about eleven o'clock in the morning, and not unfrequently lasts until within an hour of the time for opening the doors to the public. During the whole of this time the actors are required to be in attendance at the wing, ready to go upon the stage whenever they are called. The same scenes are rehearsed over and over again until the persons engaged are so thoroughly wearied out that they cease to have any sense or conception of what they are doing. The first rehearsal is generally rather a pleasant affair. On this hopeful occasion, when the new piece is fresh and unhackneyed, the actors and actresses, the manager, the stage manager, and the author, usually make a point of presenting themselves in their best clothes. You may be sure that the leading lady will make her appearance arrayed in all the choicest glory of her wardrobe; she will do her hair in the most attractive style, sport all her jewelry, and wear the most delicate pair of light-coloured kid gloves that she can procure for love or money. The leading man will possi-

bly indue himself in a bran new suit for the occasion; the low comedian will assert his high respectability as a social being by wearing a black frock coat of sober cut; and the author, in a similar fashion, will endeavour to impress the company in general, and the manager in particular, with the idea that he is in good credit with his tailor, and keeps an account at a banker's.

After a day or two, however, these efforts to create an impression will gradually relax, and by the end of the week the leading lady will be content to present herself in a linsey-woolsey, while the leading gentleman, the low comedian, and the author will quietly relapse into an indifferent state of second best. After a week of rehearsal, when everybody is getting weary and ill-tempered, and when everybody has had angry words with everybody else, it is useless to keep up this deception any longer. Why should Mr Author waste another white waistcoat and an embroidered shirt-front upon a leading lady who has had the ungrateful audacity to tell him that her part is weak, and wants writing up? And why should Miss Leading Lady go to the trouble of having her hair dressed, and to the expense of another pair of primrose kid gloves, for the sake of a man who declines to write up her part and won't let her



introduce her favourite song in that appropriate situation in the second act?

Rehearsing is a painful process. There is nobody to applaud, and, as very few actors show what they are going to do "on the night," there is really nothing to call for applause. The stage manager is a most inexorable person. His word is law, and must be obeyed as implicitly as the mandate of a slave-driver or a taskmaster at the hulks. At his word of command the great man of the theatre, the envied idol of the public, must "clear the stage," or appear to his call as submissively as the meanest official in the house.

One of the greatest crimes against the Draconian code of the theatre is to be late for rehearsal and keep the stage waiting. Very amusing are the excuses sometimes made when this law is transgressed.

"Really, Mr Driver," Mr Thespis Brown will say, with a countenance full of the deepest concern, "I—I could not possibly help it; my cab broke down, and I had a very narrow escape with my life. It's a mercy I'm here at all."

"Oh, Mr Driver! I am so sorry," says the leading lady; "but mamma was taken with a fainting fit just as I was leaving home, and I was

obliged to stop until the doctor came. Poor thing! she is really very seriously ill."

"Stop! stop! don't say a word," exclaims the comic man, anticipating Mr Driver's wrath and the imposition of a fine. "My house was broken into this morning by burglars, and the fellows made a clean sweep of my silver tea-service, my watch and chain, and all my wife's jewels. It's a mercy they didn't murder us in our beds, for they actually took the watch and chain from under my pillow as I lay peacefully reposing in the arms of Morpheus."

Who could resist this? Not even Mr Driver; for he can appreciate the loss of silver spoons. And then think of the narrow escape of Mr Mopus! What if he had been ——? Horrible to think of! There would have been no one to take the part. It would have been necessary to postpone the piece—perhaps to abandon it altogether. How could any one have the heart to fine a man who has been robbed of his silver teapot, and has narrowly escaped having his throat cut?

"All over again" is not unfrequently the order which salutes the ear of the wearied actor after he has been rehearsing for three or four hours. He has scarcely a leg to stand upon (for Mr

Driver does not permit the luxury of seats), and is faint and sick with hunger. That "all over again" is like the quarter-deck order for four dozen more lashes. Mr Thespis is once more tied up to the halyards, and Mr Driver cuts away at him with his cat-o'-nine-tails for three or four hours more.

And, after all, stage rehearsals constitute but the mechanical portion of the preparation for the public performance of the piece. On the stage the actor learns and practises the business of the various scenes, marks his exits and his entrances, arranges where he is to cross, turn up, take the stage, &c. But he has yet to study his part. He has to conceive the character and shape the manner of its embodiment. This important part of the work he must do at home, in his own study, in the street as he walks along, or in some secluded spot in the Park, where there is nobody to overhear his ravings and witness his strange gesticulations.

This part of an actor's work is often performed under serious difficulties. It occasionally happens that the person who lives in the next house, or lodges in the floor below, entertains a strong, if not a conscientious, objection to the daily practice of the words and business of a hero of tragedy

addicted to vociferous exclamations and broadsword combats. Others have a similar distaste for domestic practice in nigger melodies and break-down dances. When these objections are urged with force and determination, the actor finds it convenient to betake himself to the wilds of Regent's Park or the solitudes of Hampstead Heath. Turf, however, is not a good thing to "take," in the stage sense, and low comedy goes for nothing in a high wind.

Trees and stones are insensible to the beauties of the nigger melody, and the daisies respond but dully to the peculiar humours of the break-down dance. Rehearsing out-of-doors, too, has this disadvantage—that when you are caught at it, the lieges put you down as a lunatic, and wonder why your friends have let you out without a keeper. The feelings of any sensitive person who is caught offering his kingdom for a horse on Hampstead Heath at noontide are by no means to be envied.

But in preparation for the performance of a piece, there are other matters besides rehearsal and study which employ the time and occupy the anxious attention of the actor. He has to look after his dress and properties. It is, of course, of the highest importance that an actor should

look the character he represents; and one important essential to this end is a characteristic make-up. In order to secure this the actor finds it necessary to spend a good deal of time in the wardrobe of the theatre.

Now, the wardrobe of a theatre is not generally a very pleasant place; nor is the wardrobe-keeper generally a very agreeable person to deal with. The room bears a close resemblance to those first-floor *salons* at our uncle's which we are accustomed to catch a glimpse of, occasionally, when the windows are open in warm weather. There is a general second-hand aspect about the place, and a pervading smell of stale humanity, which are anything but pleasant. The costumes are wrapped up in bundles and stowed away in racks all round the room, and the dingy, greasy linings of doublets, trunks, and shirts, which you see peeping out, are by no means suggestive of magnificence or splendour. To get what you want out of this extensive and varied stock is no easy matter.

The wardrobe-keeper insists, as a rule, that any article he may chance to lay his hand upon is exactly what you require. Inform him that you want the habiliments necessary for the due embodiment of Jem Baggs, and he will complacently

offer you a slouched hat and a slashed doublet. Announce yourself as Alexander the Great, and he will endeavour to convince you that a square-cut blue coat with brass buttons is the very thing. The ideas of the property-man are bound fast in the rusty shackles of tradition: Stalker always wore that black velvet shape, why shouldn't you? Mugginton had that pair of check trousers made expressly for the part; you couldn't possibly do better than don the trousers, and follow in the footsteps of Mugginton. If you are not a thorough master of the locutions which characterized the conversation of the soldier in the seven ages, you will never get what you want from the wardrobe-keeper. Then, again, you have to wrestle with the property-man. The property-man has it in his power to put you to the torture—ay, to kill you outright, if he should feel so disposed. He can smother you in a helmet, break your ribs with a cuirass, pierce you with an unbuttoned foil, or dislocate every joint in your body with a basket-horse several hundredweights too heavy for you. If you don't look after him in time, depend upon it he will punish you in one way or another. Not that the property-man is a cruel, a bloodthirsty, or a vindictive person; on the contrary, he is, in general, a most amiable individual, overflowing

with the milk—slightly flavoured with rum—of human kindness, and is always ready to oblige. But then his artistic eye is in the habit of looking at things in the abstract—at helmets without regard to the heads they are to cover, and at basket-horses without regard to the legs that are to bestride them. The property-man requires to be instructed, watched, persuaded, talked to like a father, failing that, talked to like a cruel uncle, whose profession is military.

At last the night comes. And oh! the torture of a first night! A few minutes before the rising of the curtain, the actor tries on his dress for the first time. He looks at himself in the glass, and probably his appearance suggests an entirely different reading of the character from that which he has conceived at rehearsals. The “make-up” suggests many things that had not occurred to him while he practised the part in the habiliments of every-day life. These new ideas crowding and rushing upon him at the last moment drive the words of the part completely out of his head. He dare not refer to his part; it would confuse him still more. Self-possessed as he seems to the audience, he is almost faint with nervousness and anxiety. For the moment he has forgotten every line of his part, and he plunges

upon the stage without even knowing the first words of his opening speech. He throws himself blindly into the arms of his dramatic fate. It is a trying ordeal; every faculty is stretched to the utmost; every nerve is strung to the highest pitch; and at length, when the curtain falls, and the actor, with the sense of having escaped some great peril, retires to his dressing-room to recover his breath and calm his agitated feelings, he is most probably met by a message from the manager, requesting him to attend another rehearsal of the piece on the following morning.

Such is the work of an actor. Let no one fancy that it is mere child's play.



## YOUR MONEY AND YOUR LIFE.

Not many years ago, being then young, ardent, and confiding, with nothing to do, and all the world before me, I received a letter from Mr Harrison, a solicitor of my acquaintance, offering me a seat on the board of a new insurance company. I had at that time a very exalted idea of the importance of the office of director, and felt highly complimented by the invitation. I immediately waited upon Mr Harrison at his office, to thank him for his kind intentions, but at the same time to make him acquainted with circumstances in my position which I considered inconsistent with the dignity and responsibility of a director of a public company. I explained that I had, as yet, no profession and no standing in society, and, moreover, that I was minus that great essential, money.

“My dear sir,” said Mr Harrison, “these little matters are of no consequence whatever; a good

name is all that is required in a director, and you have one—Ralph Abercrombie, Esq., M.A., of Brasenose College, Oxford. What could be better ? ”

“ True,” I said, “ the name is a most honourable one ; but I understand that a director is required to take a large number of shares, and I candidly tell you that I am not in a position to—”

“ Make your mind easy on that point, my dear sir,” said Mr Harrison ; “ if necessary I will qualify you.”

“ It’s very kind of you, I’m sure,” I said ; “ but I scarcely like—”

“ My dear sir,” said Mr Harrison, anticipating what I was going to say, “ you need have no scruple about the matter ; the thing is done every day. I have qualified scores of directors in my time. You know Lord Churchmouse, Chairman of the Paramount Life and Fire ? ”

I said, of course ; he was a well-known public man.

“ Exactly ; a well-known public man, a representative man in the insurance world ; but between you and me—and you will understand this is entirely masonic,” said Mr Harrison, laying his finger on his nose—“ I qualified him. In fact, his lordship always makes it a rule to be qualified ;

and he's worth it, for he's one of the best directors going. If there were only more days in the week, and more hours in the day, Lord Churchmouse might be as rich as Rothschild, instead of being as poor as Job."

"How do you mean?" I asked.

"Why, his lordship lives upon his director's fees; the more boards he attends the more he gets."

I said I thought it rather a shabby way for a lord to get his living.

"Shabby! my dear sir," said Mr Harrison, elevating his eyebrows, "how can you say so? Did you ever consider what a director of a public company ought to be? No; I see you have not. I will tell you. He ought to be a man of talent, of tact, of energy, of business habits, shrewd, sagacious, and, above all, enterprising. We don't want a dolt with his pockets full of money, to sit at a board; we want a smart man, with his head full of brains. The public make a great mistake about this matter. They think a director ought to be simply a man of property, and never reflect that the real desideratum is the man of business. Does a City firm choose a manager of its affairs on account of his wealth? No; but because the person is well qualified for the work; and a well

qualified man in a City house will get from five hundred to a thousand a year; while the director of a public company is obliged to be content with a paltry fee of one or two guineas for each attendance at the board. My dear sir, if I had my way, I would do away with the qualification altogether, choose directors for their business qualities, and pay them handsome salaries."

I admitted that his argument had some force.

"Very well," said Mr Harrison; "on this principle I want you to be a director of the new company I am now projecting. You have a good name, you are a graduate of an university, and, above all, you are a man of energy and sagacity, with a decided turn for business."

I said I felt flattered.

"Not at all, my dear sir," said Mr Harrison, "I am merely doing you justice. I have observed you. I think you will make a good director; and, as I said before, if necessary I will qualify you. The advantages to yourself, I need scarcely say, will be considerable; you will be introduced to public men and public life, you will get an insight into a most important branch of business, and you will be paid for your services."

Mr Harrison's representations were altogether so plausible, and I found so many worthy people

who looked upon insurance speculation as perfectly legitimate, and so many more who envied me my good fortune in being offered a directorship, that I consented to become a member of the board of the new company. On intimating my resolution to Mr Harrison, I received a summons to attend the first board meeting at that gentleman's office on the following Wednesday. I presented myself at the appointed hour, and found Mr Harrison's private office cleared of many of the books and papers which usually encumbered it, and temporarily set out as a board-room, with a long table covered with a green cloth, half a dozen heavy mahogany chairs, and as many virgin blotting-pads, regularly ranged on the table opposite the chairs. Mr Harrison entered almost immediately, accompanied by three gentlemen, to whom he introduced me with much elaboration, and a great flourish of our names and titular distinctions, repeating them twice over, and dwelling with marked emphasis on Mr Ralph Abercrombie, M.A., of Brasenose College, Oxford. I found that the gentlemen with whom I was about to be associated on the board of the new company were Captain Barlow, a white-headed, retired naval officer; Colonel Buncombe, a big, burly, military personage, with a bullet head, a bull neck, and a

voice like thunder; and Mr Beasley, a thin, melancholy-looking man, with spiky hair, who, as I afterwards learned, was a leather merchant in Bermondsey.

"Now, gentlemen," said Mr Harrison, "we will, if you please, proceed to business. Colonel Buncombe, will you kindly take the chair? Have you any objection? None. But still, perhaps it will be better to proceed in the regular manner. I beg to move that Colonel Buncombe do take the chair. Will any one second that?" Captain Barlow seconded it, and the motion was carried unanimously. Colonel Buncombe accordingly took the chair.

"Now, Mr Chairman and gentlemen," said Mr Harrison, "perhaps you will allow me to introduce my nephew, who will act as secretary *pro tem.*, and undertake the duties gratuitously until the formation of the company, when you may see fit to appoint him permanently to the office." There was no objection to this, and Mr Harrison's nephew was introduced. He was a very tall young man, with an elaborate head of hair, and so well dressed and complete in all his outward appointments as to suggest, either that he was independent and could afford to give his services gratuitously, or that he had unlimited credit and didn't

pay his tailor. We now took our seats, and Mr Harrison, placing himself at the right hand of the chairman, produced a fair sheet of foolscap, and laid it upon the table before him.

"Mr Chairman and gentlemen," said Mr Harrison, holding up the fair sheet of paper, and placing his forefinger upon his brow, "this is our scheme at present." Mr Harrison paused as if he had made a joke and were waiting for the applause; but all that came was the dry remark of Mr Beasley, that there was nothing on it.

"Mr Beasley," said Mr Harrison, "you are quite right, there is nothing on it at present; but there will be, sir, in time—in time. You are doubtless aware, Mr Chairman, that I have had great experience in these matters, and that I have brought out many companies, all of which have succeeded, and are now in a flourishing condition—in a flourishing condition."

Mr Harrison always repeated a triumphant climax.

"But, sir," he continued, "they have all begun with this—with a fair sheet of paper. I like to call the attention of my directors to the fact as an illustration of what great results from little causes spring. We begin with this blank sheet of paper; we write upon it the name of the com-

pany, the amount of the capital, the names of the officers, and the objects. We proceed from this to issue the prospectus, to draw up and settle the deed, to obtain signatures for two-thirds of the capital in accordance with the Act of Parliament, and finally to obtain a certificate of incorporation. Then we are a company, and may proceed to business. This sheet of paper, Mr Chairman and gentlemen, is the seed, the incorporated company, the full-grown tree, which will in due time strike its roots deep into the earth, and overshadow the land with its luxuriant branches. Now, sir, it would have been very easy for me to have placed before you a scheme already cut and dried, to have brought you together, so to speak, round a tree of considerable growth; but that is not my system. I do not like to prejudice my directors"—he always called us *his* directors—"in any way. My plan is to let them judge for themselves, and have the whole conduct of their own affairs, *ab initio—ab initio.*"

He repeated the Latin, and emphasized it by placing his finger on his nose.

"I, therefore, only desire to say, Mr Chairman and gentlemen, that there is a want to be supplied, that there is an ample field for a new life insurance company conducted on sound prin-



ciples—on sound principles, you will understand—and that the present time is highly favourable for going before the public with a new scheme. Sir, it is proved by statistics that only a very small per-centage of the population is insured, and that there are many quarters of this favoured land where the blessings of insurance have never even been heard of; where the light of the glorious system of providence against death and fire, founded upon mathematical principles about which there can be no dispute, has never penetrated. Therefore, sir, any one who, at the present time, founds a new insurance association, and conducts it upon sound principles, may be regarded as a benefactor of his species. Let us begin, then, with the admitted fact that a new company is a great want. We are met here to take the preliminary steps towards supplying that want. That, I believe, is so?”

Colonel Buncombe nodded assent, and Captain Barlow said, “Yes, yes,” with the air of a man fully prepared to agree to anything and everything.

“Very well, then,” continued Mr Harrison; “the first thing is the name. Shakespeare says, what’s in a name? Now, I can tell you, Mr Chairman, there is a great deal in a name, espe-

cially in the name of an insurance company. What you want is something that will sound familiar to the general ear, and at the same time express stability."

Mr Beasley suggested "The Rock."

"A very good title, my dear sir," said Mr Harrison; "but, unfortunately for us, there is already a very excellent association of that name."

Captain Barlow suggested "The Impregnable."

"Most admirable," said Mr Harrison, "and fitly expressing the character of the association we are about to found; but there, I regret to say, we are also anticipated."

Various other names were suggested, all expressing a firm basis and an unassailable position; but Mr Harrison's intimate knowledge of the Insurance world enabled him to inform us that they were all in use. It is true that the last result of Mr Beasley's excogitation, "The Gibraltar," had not been appropriated, but, though expressing all the impregnability that could be desired in a word, it was considered to be rather far-fetched. In order to expedite our deliberations on this important point, the Insurance Directory was sent for; when, on looking over the alphabetical list,

we found that almost every desirable name had already been used.

"In this difficulty," said Mr Harrison, "there is a very good rule to be guided by. Let our name, whatever it may be, begin with the letter A; for then we shall have the advantage of appearing in the first rank of the published list of companies. That, I can tell you, from long experience, is a matter of considerable importance. If we can stand at the very head of the list, so much the better. Let me see what is the first company in the list. Ah, the Albert! Can any gentleman suggest a name that will stand before the Albert?"

Mr Beasley suggested the "Acorn."

"Good, very good," said Mr Harrison; "the Acorn, the seed of the oak, the germ of those wooden walls which have so long guarded our shores from the foot of the invader; an emblem of security, no doubt; but there is, I think, a want of development about it."

Mr Beasley was good enough to coincide: "there was a want of development about it." Mr Boshier, the secretary *pro tem.*, in an unguarded moment, suggested "The Accommodation," but withdrew it at once, and seemed to be sorry he had spoken. The Colonel then, wildly, advanced

the merits of "Abecedarian," but that, though admitted to stand second to none in an alphabetical point of view, was also, on calm reflection, rejected. At this period of extreme embarrassment, Mr Harrison laid his finger emphatically on his nose, and exclaimed, "The Adamant." We all, with one assenting and delighted voice, repeated "The Adamant." "The Adamant is your title against the world," said Mr Harrison. We admitted it, and Mr Harrison took a pen and wrote, at the head of the blank sheet of foolscap, "THE ADAMANT."

"Now, Mr Chairman and gentlemen," he continued, "having once made a beginning, it is comparatively easy to go on. We come next to the capital. How much shall it be? If you will allow me to advise, I would say not less than one million sterling. Have you any objection to one million sterling?" We had no objection, and Mr Harrison wrote, "Capital one million sterling."

"The next thing," said Mr Harrison, "is the prospectus. Now, sir, I have no desire to dictate to my directors, or to interfere with their legitimate functions; at the same time you will, perhaps, permit me to submit to your consideration the draft of a prospectus which I have already prepared."

Leave being granted, Mr Harrison proceeded to read his draft. It was a most flowery production, recommending The Adamant (the name of which Mr Harrison filled in as he went on) to the notice of the public as an institution combining the utmost security with the most advantageous and easy terms for the shareholders and insurers. The great success that had attended other offices which did not profess to offer such advantages, was pointed out; the obvious inference being that The Adamant could not fail to prove more successful than any of them. The Adamant was specially designed to meet the wants and requirements of the working classes, and, in conclusion, it was mentioned that in anticipation of the great and wide-spread operations of the company, branches of The Adamant would be forthwith established in all the principal towns of the United Kingdom, at the Cape of Good Hope, and in Australasia. After receiving some verbal alterations, with a view to grammar, suggested by Ralph Abercrombie, Esq., M. A., of Brasenose College, Oxford, who was glad of an opportunity of showing that he was not entirely ignorant of insurance matters, the prospectus was adopted, and Mr Harrison triumphantly announced that The Adamant Assurance Association

was formed, and had existence from that moment.

“You perceive, Mr Chairman and gentlemen,” he said, “what this sheet of paper, which an hour ago was blank and not worth a halfpenny, has now become. Here we have the name of the company, its objects, a capital of one million sterling, and a board of directors to carry on the business.”

After this we met regularly every Wednesday to take measures for bringing the company into operation. These measures were taken in due course, and they amounted to this: Mr Harrison’s nephew, Mr Bosher, was appointed secretary at a salary of three hundred pounds per annum; Colonel Buncombe’s son was appointed accountant at one hundred and fifty pounds a year to begin with; the lower part of Captain Barlow’s house, in a leading thoroughfare, was taken for offices at a rent of one hundred and twenty pounds (which I subsequently discovered enabled the Captain to live rent free); a brother-in-law of Mr Harrison’s was appointed actuary; another relation was appointed superintendent of agents at a salary and commission; and an arrangement was entered into, whereby Mr Harrison was to be paid two thousand pounds as promoter when the company

floated. Further, Mr Harrison had obtained the consent of two gentlemen of distinction, the one a baronet and the other an admiral, to give their names as trustees—on the distinct understanding, however, that they should have no responsibility. Finally, Mr Harrison had achieved the great triumph of inducing Lord Churchmouse to join the board. Nothing now remained but to comply with the requirements of the Act of Parliament. All had gone so smoothly hitherto, that I thought it would have been the easiest matter imaginable to comply with the Act of Parliament. But that part of the business proved by no means so easy as I had supposed; for what the Act of Parliament required was, that two-thirds of the capital should be subscribed for, before the company could be incorporated and licensed to carry on business.

“Gentlemen,” said Mr Harrison, “it is highly necessary that you should put your shoulders to the wheel, and obtain shareholders.”

We did put our shoulders to the wheel, each in his own circle, but with very small success. Notwithstanding the immense capital of *The Adamant*, as set forth in the prospectus, and the distinguished names of the trustees and directors, our friends and the public were blindly indifferent to the advantages of becoming shareholders of

the new association, and were not to be induced to append their signatures to the deed. In this emergency, Mr Harrison came to the rescue, and impressed us all with a sense of his superior influence and experience by obtaining the required signatures in the course of a few days. Mr Harrison's peculiar eloquence and powers of persuasion had more force than the million of capital and all our influential names put together. At his solicitation, a stationer, two printers, an upholsterer, a builder, and an advertising agent, all signed their names for a hundred shares each : on the understanding, as I subsequently learned, that they were to be employed by the company, and that the price of their shares should be put against their accounts. The Act of Parliament was complied with, the corporate seal was brought to the office in a mahogany box, and The Adamant Assurance Association began business.

Our secretary, Mr Bosher, seemed to be a most active and energetic officer. He was constantly stirring up the agents, and almost every board-day he had from thirty to forty proposals of insurance to lay before us. And we appeared to be extremely fortunate in the nature of the business offered to us. All the lives, on examination by our medical officers, were found to be good,



first-class, in fact, and consequently we had nothing to do but accept the proposals and grant the policies. We, the directors, endeavoured to second the efforts of the secretary by canvassing our own connections. We insured our own lives, and induced all within the sphere of our influence to insure *their* lives. I, for my part, brought up an uncle, two college chums just beginning life, my tailor, a tobacconist, and a livery-stable keeper, all of whom insured for a hundred, just to oblige me. We were getting on like a house on fire. One day, Mr Bosher announced that the amount insured in The Adamant was close upon a hundred thousand pounds. We sent for two bottles of sherry on the strength of it, and, after the board, sat round the fire and discussed the sherry and our brilliant prospects. Everything looked bright and promising; our policies were accumulating at a rapid rate; and our shares, though they did not appear to go off very quickly, were quoted at two and a half premium. At the very next board meeting, Mr Harrison asked for his bill of costs, including his promoter's fee, amounting in all to two thousand five hundred pounds. When the chairman read out the entry from the agenda-book, there was a dead pause for a few minutes. It was Mr Beasley who spoke at length. Mr Beasley thought the

sum rather a large sum. Mr Harrison immediately put on an injured look, and handed in his bill duly made out, and appealed to Lord Churchmouse if five hundred pounds, in addition to his fee as a promoter, could be called excessive? Lord Churchmouse said he had had great experience of such matters, and he had known the solicitor's bill to be double and even treble that amount. So far, then, from considering the charge excessive, he thought it exceedingly moderate. Mr Beasley then appealed to Mr Harrison to let his claim stand over, until the company should be in a better position. Mr Harrison protested that the position of the company, considering the short time it had been in existence, was unparalleled, and that it would be nothing short of base ingratitude to refuse him the just reward of his labours. I was strongly disposed to take Mr Beasley's view of the case; but as the chairman, Lord Churchmouse, and Captain Barlow, were inclined to support Mr Harrison, we were obliged to give way, and the claim was allowed, and the cheque given for the amount there and then. Cheques were also voted to Captain Barlow for the rent of his premises, and to the secretary, the accountant, and the others, in respect of their salaries.

We did not have so much of Mr Harrison's

company after this ; but, under the energetic management of Mr Boshier, proposals continued to pour in rapidly, and we appeared to be prospering greatly. One day, however, when some rather heavy cheques had been voted for printing, advertising, and stationery, Mr Beasley rose to ask a question. He wanted to know more precisely what was the exact position of the company ? Mr Boshier assured him that it was in a most flourishing condition ; that a great portion of the capital had been taken up ; that the policies of the company amounted to considerably more than a hundred thousand pounds ; and that the income was rapidly increasing. Lord Churchmouse thought the statement most satisfactory : but Mr Beasley was not so easily assured. He wanted to know what were the actual momentary resources of the company ? “In fact,” said Mr Beasley, “I want to know how much we have to our account ?” Mr Boshier replied that at a rough guess, he thought about ten thousand pounds. Would Mr Boshier have any objection to produce the bank-book ? Mr Boshier evidently had some slight objection, for he turned rather red in the face, and hesitated. Mr Beasley, however, insisted, and the book was produced ; and, on examination, it was found that our account amounted to exactly

fifteen hundred pounds. Mr Bosher hurried to explain that many of the shareholders had not yet paid their deposits, but that they were good and true men, and might be depended on; and that a large amount of the premiums was still in the hands of the agents, who were also good and true men, and would all pay up in due course.

"Well," said Mr Beasley, "it appears to me that we are sitting on a barrel of gunpowder."

"My dear Mr Beasley," said Lord Churchmouse, "you must really excuse me if I say that you have had very little experience of these matters. There is no danger, I assure you, in sitting on a barrel of gunpowder, if there is no fire in the vicinity. I assure you, sir, I have sat upon many barrels of gunpowder, and not one of them has ever exploded yet."

"But suppose one or two deaths were to occur among our policy-holders," said Mr Beasley.

"A most unlikely thing," said Lord Churchmouse. "Our lives are all first-class, and we have been in operation a very short time; nobody has had time to die, my dear sir. I am sure our actuary will bear me out in what I say, that there is an ascertained rule in these matters."

The actuary bore his lordship out in what he said—there *was* an ascertained rule in these mat-

ters, and it would be contrary to that rule for any of our policy-holders to die for some considerable time. And his lordship, to reassure Mr Beasley, told several pleasant stories of insurance companies that had tided over difficulties in a most remarkable manner. One in particular, of which he had some knowledge, though he had never been personally connected with it, had lived for the first year of its existence by ordering suites of furniture for the office and selling them as soon as they came in. His lordship had no hesitation in saying that that was a swindle; but the office floated at last, and was now one of the most solid and respectable companies in London. Mr Beasley was silenced, but not satisfied. He expressed to me in private great uneasiness at the position of the company, and the heavy responsibility which rested on us. We both talked of resigning; but on due consideration it appeared to us to be our duty to stick to the ship, and do our best to prevent her from sinking. Mr Bosher became more assuring every week, and one board-day he met us in high exultation, and with a smile of triumph on his face.

"Mr Chairman and gentlemen," he said, "I have to congratulate you; one of our policy-holders is dead."

Mr Beasley turned quite pale.

"Mr Boshier," he said, "this is not a subject for joking."

"My dear sir," said Mr Boshier, "I had not the slightest intention to joke: but really this is the best thing that could have happened to us at the present moment. The deceased Mr Wilkins's policy is only for a hundred pounds; we shall pay at once, and that will encourage the others. You will see, we shall have a rush of business from Mr Wilkins's neighbourhood immediately. Our greatest drawback hitherto has been, that we have had no deaths among our policy-holders." Lord Churchmouse endorsed all Mr Boshier said in the most cheerful manner, and the cheque for the family of the deceased Mr Wilkins was despatched at the earliest moment. What might have been the effect of that prompt payment upon Mr Wilkins's neighbourhood we were not permitted to know. At the very next board-meeting Mr Boshier had to announce the death of Mr Jopling, who was insured with us for one thousand pounds. Mr Boshier was not exultant now. The deposits on the capital had not yet been paid, the accounts in the hands of the agents still remained out, and we had little more than a thousand pounds in the bank. Lord Churchmouse proposed that we

should at once make a call upon the shareholders ; but this was opposed by Mr Bosher, on the ground that it would tend to shake the confidence of the market, and interfere with the progress of business. Mr Beasley then proposed that each of the directors should put down two hundred pounds to meet the emergency, and that steps should be immediately taken to transfer the business. Lord Churchmouse objected. He did not see why the directors should bear all the burden. We had the power to make a call, and would be perfectly justified in exercising it. Mr Harrison, who had been sent for post-haste, arrived in the midst of our discussion, and calmed us with the assurance that there was no occasion for alarm.

“Mr Chairman and gentlemen,” he said, “from information which I have just received, I find that this is a matter you may safely leave in the hands of your solicitor.”

On being asked for an explanation, Mr Harrison informed us that he had learned on good authority that Jopling had made false representations, and that, at the time he signed the declaration as to his health, he was suffering from delirium tremens.

“Gentlemen,” said Mr Harrison, “my advice to you is, dispute the claim.”

We were all averse to this at first ; but on receiving satisfactory *primâ facie* evidence that Jopling had really deceived us, we placed the matter in the hands of Mr Harrison. Mr Harrison disputed the claim, and the executors of Mr Jopling immediately commenced an action against us. There were a great many preliminary legal skirmishes, offering, at times, some hope of a compromise ; but it came to a grand pitched battle at last, and The Adamant Assurance Association got the worst of it. It was not simply that the verdict was against us with heavy costs, but the counsel for the executors, in a telling speech, covered us with ridicule and scorn, and even went the length of stigmatizing our company as a swindle. Mr Beasley returned from the trial crying like a child, declaring that he was a ruined man, and cursing the day on which he had been induced to become a director of an insurance company. The evil tidings spread fast. The very next morning the amalgamators were swarming about the doors of The Adamant, like sharks round a sinking ship. Bills fairly rained upon us, most of them with threats of process if the amounts were not discharged forthwith. The Adamant was panic-stricken. The secretary was taken in satisfaction of a debt to his tailor, the



directors were at their wits' end, and within a week The Adamant was in Chancery, a candidate for winding up. The Vice-Chancellor took his time over the process; but he wound us up pretty tightly at last. Had each of the shareholders borne his fair share of the debts, it would not have pressed very severely upon any one; but the great majority of them were men of straw, and the Vice-Chancellor does not trouble himself about phantoms. He came down upon those who had means, or reputation, and the burden fell, very properly, upon the directors and certain tradesmen who had signed their names for shares as a means of forwarding their own business. Happily for the peace of mind of such of us as felt the responsibility of our position, the policy-holders came to no harm. In the confusion of the break-up, a clerk *borrowed* the policy-book and transferred the business of The Adamant to another office.

## NOBODY'S DOG.

It was on a cold, dark, foggy night in November, as I was trudging homewards, encumbered by a fearful amount of great coat, goloshes, and umbrella, that I was accosted by a large white dog. After some time I perceived that he was looking up in my face, as if wishing to attract my attention.

"Pray whose dog are you?" I inquired.

The poor brute looked up at me with a pitiful expression, and I read my answer in his heavy, beseeching eye:

"Alas! sir, I am nobody's dog."

"Poor brute!" I exclaimed, "I pity you, and would take you home, and give you supper and a dry bed in the cellar if I dared; but I have a cross old housekeeper who hates your species, and whom even the footprint of one of your race on the door-step driveth to the verge of madness. Go along, sir!"

The dog took a backward jump, and retreated precipitately.

I soon fell into one of those musing moods which a walk through quiet and deserted streets rarely fails to beget in the least thoughtful minds. I gave way to thinking, and my thoughts were of dogs. There was no workhouse for dogs as there was for Christians and even pagans.\* If a dog lost his master, or was drowned, or fell into decay, what was he to do? He could not garotte a baker in the street; he could not swindle shareholders, or chalk a mackerel on the pavement; he could not write begging letters, or advertise his distress in the papers; nor could he go to his fellow-dogs and appeal to them with any hope of success. What could he do? He might possibly be able to rob a butcher's shop of a steak, but even then everything would be against his getting clear off with his prize. Clearly the case of dogs in reduced circumstances was a very hard one, and something ought to be done for them. I was just thinking what that something might be, when I became sensible of a pattering sound on the pavement behind me; and on turning round, behold there was my white four-footed friend close at my heels.

Dear, dear! Well; after my philanthropic (or

\* There is such an institution now: the Home for Lost and Starving Dogs, at Holloway.

rather philocynic) theory about reduced dogs, I could not with any grace dismiss this canine waif until I had made some endeavour to mitigate his distresses. The brute seemed to start up to put me to the proof. Seeing, with the quick perception of his nature, that I was softened towards him, he approached nearer, and once more appealed to me with doleful looks.

"Poor dog," said I, "you are doubtless hungry, as well as weary and cold. Come, I will do my duty towards you as a Christian, and give you something to eat." And with that I led the way into a tavern, the dog following.

"Now, nobody's dog, what will you have?"

There was quite another expression in his face now. The hang-dog look had vanished in an instant, and his eyes beamed with expectancy.

"What will you have, nobody's dog?"

He wagged his tail and smacked his lean chops, as much as to say, "Anything, so that you give it me quickly." I tossed him half a biscuit, which he bolted at a gulp. Another disappeared in the same way; but the eager, hungry eye was still watching the motion of my hand. "More" was written there as plainly as "No smoking allowed in this compartment" was written upon the partition which kept the scene

of our refection select. More he had ; but never so much as a wink did that dog allow to obscure the watchfulness of that eager eye of his, until he had bolted four biscuits.

"Come, now, I think you will do, nobody's dog;" and going out into the street, I endeavoured by flourishing my umbrella in a threatening manner, and otherwise conducting myself objectively, to make it understood by that dog that I conceived I had done my duty by him, and was resolved to be troubled no more. The dog retreated hastily, and seizing the favourable moment, I turned a corner, and ran away. On reaching home, I found a comfortable fire in my room, and the faithful Mrs Brown, my housekeeper, preparing supper.

"I have been bothered by a dog following me, Mrs Brown."

"Oh, drat all dogs, I say," replied Mrs Brown, tartly.

"I really thought he would have followed me home, and insisted on my taking him in."

"Then it's lucky he didn't," said Mrs Brown, flourishing the poker a little. "I hate dogs."

\* \* \* \* \*

I had disposed of my supper, and smoked my cigar down to the stump, when I was startled

by a noise at the street door, as of some one trying the lock. Presently it was repeated; and this time it sounded, I thought, like the noise of a saw. At that time of night, in a suburban neighbourhood, it was natural to think of burglars. I armed myself with the poker, and crept quietly into the passage.

"Who's there?" I called.

No answer. Presently the scratching was resumed.

"Who's there?" I called again.

This time there was an answer, and it came through below the door in the shape of a low whine. A suspicion of the truth instantly flashed across me, and I at once undid the chain, and opened the door; and there, on the door-step, covered with mud, dripping with wet, and shivering with the cold, stood, or rather crouched, that big, white, vagabond dog, whom I had congratulated myself on having got rid of for ever.

"What do you want now, you exorbitant, ungrateful, insatiable dog?"

He whined and shivered pitifully, as if to remind me of the relentless rain and biting cold.

"Well, come in, you tiresome brute; it is a cruel night, to be sure, and you appear to have had enough of it."

I took that dog in, I wiped his feet for him upon the mat, lodged him on some straw in the coal-cellar, and retired to rest with a sense of having done my duty that day, if ever I had in my life. I had heard that well-doing conduces to all kinds of happiness, even to sound sleep and pleasant dreams. I ought, then, to have slept well that night, and I believe I did; but whether I enjoyed pleasant dreams or not I cannot say, but I do know that I was awake next morning by a fearful row in the house. Bang, bang—get out—hi—bang, bang—get out—bang—yelp! I thought of the dog; and rushing to the door of my room, I discovered the good Mrs Brown on the landing charging my *protégé* in a most savage and deadly manner.

“What’s the matter, Mrs Brown? what’s the matter?” I shouted.

“A great, big, ugly white dog has got into the house,” cried the agonized lady; “and he’s been and left his marks all along the passage.” (Bang—yelp!)

“Don’t hurt him, Mrs Brown, don’t hurt him. I let him in, it’s my fault.” (Bang—yelp!)

Being now dressed, I hurried to the rescue of the innocent animal, upon whose devoted head Mrs Brown’s stair-broom was evidently taking

lethal effect; but I could achieve little for the poor brute beyond a respite from the persecution of the broom. Mrs Brown couldn't abide dogs; and with a declaration to that effect, she retired to the regions below.

I took nobody's dog with me into the parlour, designing, if possible, to awaken in his mind a sense of the trying position in which his unfortunate conduct had placed me; but while revolving whether instant elimination, enforced by kicks, would not be the most impressive and effectual mode of making myself understood, the faithful, but in this instant impetuous, Mrs Brown burst into the room in a state of great excitement, and cried,

"There! there's your protiggy!" In each hand Mrs Brown extended a plate. On one reposed a roll of butter, on the other a bloater. The butter showed marks of teeth, and had a decided appearance of having been licked; the bloater was gnawed and mangled beyond even maternal recognition. There was an awful pause; and to a third party I fancy the *tableau* presented at that moment would have been highly imposing. There stood Mrs Brown indignant and accusatory; there sat I overwhelmed, astonished, hurt; and there sat the vagabond dog, crouching on



his haunches under my glance, with a look that unmistakably proclaimed him guilty.

"And look here," cried Mrs Brown, turning to another clause in the indictment, "look at the marks of his feet all along the passage and down the stairs."

"Well, Mrs Brown, what shall I do with him?"

"Drown him," Mrs Brown said; and she said it from the bottom of her heart.

"O Mrs Brown, that would be cruel. No; I could not drown him; but I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll take him out and lose him."

"Ah, well," said Mrs Brown tartly, "you'll lose that dog, or lose me,—there!"

Did Mrs Brown, my good, faithful, attached Mrs Brown, contemplate giving me warning? The bare thought of such a thing armed me at once with resolution. I put on my hat and coat, and left the house, whistling the dog after me. Whither should I go? To what *terra incognita* should I bend my steps? In fact, how should I contrive to lose this troublesome dog?

I decided to be guided by fate, and set out, the dog following at my heels, apparently perfectly unconscious of my design against him. He trotted now before me, now behind me, wagged

his tail, and occasionally stopped to say a word or two to other dogs; probably to inform them that he had found a master who had plenty of bloaters and butter in his cupboard, and that consequently he was now all right. Little did he think that the end and object of his master's evolutions at that moment, his darting down by streets and through the mazes of mews, his sudden disappearances round corners and down alleys, his rushing in at front doors of shops, and stealing out at the back doors, his getting behind hoardings and into sly inclosures—little did that unsuspecting dog conceive that all this was the desperate execution of a deeply-laid plan for losing him, and throwing him once more upon the cruel, rainy, foggy, sloppy, victualless, and bedless world, a masterless, houseless, hungry, mendicant, vagrant dog. But for some time my best and most desperate efforts were in vain and fruitless, as if he had known my intent, and had been watching every move to defeat it. At length, in the remote and unexplored regions of Islington, a favourable opportunity presented itself. I seized it; and while the dog was engaged in a long and earnest confabulation with another dog, I jumped in at the open door of an omnibus, and the next instant was driven off. After a prudent

interval, I ventured to peep out from behind the panel, but no dog could I see. I had eluded him at last. Well, thank goodness!

I got out at the Bank with the intention of proceeding onwards by another omnibus. As the conductor tendered me sixpence in change, he said, "Is this your dog, sir?"

As I live there was the dog again at my heels, wagging his tail and stretching his jaws as much as to say, "Am I not a clever faithful dog now, to discover my good master and follow him so far, and never lose sight of him?" How was I to kick the brute or strike him with that innocent look of self-satisfaction in his face? I could not do it. Still I was resolved to commit the negative cruelty of losing him. Ha! should I hurry to the Thames and pitch him in, take him by the scurf of the neck and fling him from the Bridge into the—rolling tide? I was neither cruel nor melodramatic enough for that; and I think a sort of regret did pass through my mind at the time that I had not been born a villain. But, alas! I had been born a diplomatist, and diplomacy must be my weapon. I took a ticket at the steamboat pier, and gave sixpence to an idler to keep back the dog, and rushed along the gangway to the boat. I was just in time. As I planted

my foot on the deck, the vessel moved off. Looking up to the shore, I saw the dog and the man struggling ; the next instant the dog broke from the man's grasp, and rushed to the pier. He was too late. But oh, how shall I describe the feeling of mingled pain and pleasure which shot through my heart, as I saw that dog leap from the pier into the river, and bravely breast the waves to follow me ?

A shout of admiration was raised from the boat, and echoed back from the shore. A hundred eyes were upon the dog. The boat, which had shot straight across the river for the purpose of turning, was now near in the shore again, so that she came within a few yards of the spot where the dog was battling with the tide. The passengers now rushed in a body to the bulwarks to watch the noble swimmer. No one appeared more interested in the scene than the captain. His attention was so absorbed by the dog that he appeared to forget all about his duties. There he stood on the paddle-box watching him. A sudden thought struck me, and I pulled the captain by the skirts :

“ Stop for him, captain, he is my dog.”

“ That I will,” said the man, in a tone of enthusiasm ; and in an instant the order was given — “ Stop her !”

One of the men threw out a rope with a noose at the end of it, and the next instant the dog floated over it, and fell into the "bite," and was dragged on deck amidst a burst of cheers. I need not say that for the rest of that journey my dog and I were the centre of attraction, the admired of all admirers. Every one had something to say to the dog, something to give him. As for myself, I think every individual person on the boat had a word to say to me. One man, more enthusiastic than the rest, who had rummaged his pockets in vain for something to give the dog, appeared quite unhappy until he had invited me to have something to drink with him when we got on shore.

I had forgotten Mrs Brown, but Mrs Brown had now to be faced. I could not part from the dog now. The very thought of having conspired to lose such a noble animal became a sting in my conscience. I took heart of grace, and resolved to face Mrs Brown at all hazards. I had never been afraid of Mrs Brown in my life, not even in my youthful days, when the good lady had been accustomed to invoke Bogie upon me; but on this occasion I am bound to say that I stood on my own door-step and knocked at my own door with a fluttering and misgiving heart.

The door was opened by Mrs Brown herself, and I entered, the dog following me. The good lady did not see the animal at first; but as she turned round from shutting the door her eye suddenly fell upon his white form in the full glare of the candle. I saw that she was about to demonstrate both by action and speech; but before she could utter a word or lift a leg I interposed.

“Don’t speak, Mrs Brown, nor utter a word until you hear what I have to say.” I led her to the parlour, placed her in an arm-chair, and sat down before her. I then related to her the adventure of the day. I threw as much pathos into the narrative as I was master of, and worked up the incidents to a climax quite dramatically, I thought. Mrs Brown listened to the end patiently, but betraying no emotion one way or the other; and when I had done, rose calmly, took up her candle, and left the room. When she brought up my dinner the dog was lying at full length on the rug; but Mrs Brown’s countenance was serene, and she uttered never a word.

For some time after his installation the dog preserved a timidity of manner that gave me the idea of his being naturally of a retiring and modest disposition; but as he became accustomed to the place, and began to feel his *status* secure, this

modesty and reserve rapidly wore off; and instead of crouching near me at the parlour fire, as he had been wont to do, he now ranged about the premises at will. By-and-by he began to bark when people called, and it was not long before he felt it incumbent upon him to conduct himself offensively to the tradespeople. He snarled at the butcher, barked at the greengrocer, and had several times sprung upon the baker so savagely that I was led to suspect the man of giving short weight. On making inquiry, I found that this was the case, though I was disposed to think I should have found it so at any time. Mrs Brown had been silent hitherto, but now she must speak. She came in one morning, fresh and floury from a dumpling, to say that the dog had got hold of the baker by the leg and was worrying him alive. I hastened to the rescue, and found that this was so far from being the case, that the dog had only got hold of the baker by the corduroys; but these, it must be confessed, he was treating in a manner utterly regardless of their expense—I mean to the baker. I rescued the baker, and applied the salve of half-a-crown to his corduroys: but on consulting his legal adviser the man returned, and insisted on five shillings, which I gave to save “further proceedings,”

though I was convinced that the corduroys could never, even in the full vigour of their prime and full flavour, have been worth half that amount. Mrs Brown said nothing, but she evidently thought the more. I was now fain to admit that I had mistaken the character of the dog. He was clearly a vicious, mischievous dog, a dog to beware of. So next morning I chained him up in the wash-house by means of a clothes-line officiously and offensively furnished by Mrs Brown. I could now await the butcher, the greengrocer, and even the baker with perfect serenity. They came and went with safety, both as respects their limbs and their garments ; and I was just thinking of going to release the prisoner for a little recreation, when my intentions were arrested by a loud knocking at the door, and presently a great deal of talking and shuffling in the hall. I hurried out to find a flurried group, consisting of Mrs Brown, Mrs Duckling, my next-door neighbour, and her servant, talking all at once loudly and angrily. Mrs Duckling held what appeared to be a dead fowl in her hand, and this seemed to be the subject of the bother. What did I say to this ?

My dog had done it—had killed Mrs Duckling's pet bantam, a little pet that she had cherished dearer than her life—the brute, the savage,



the monster, the—Mrs Duckling sank into a chair, sobbing and weeping bitterly. Then the maid took up the tale, and by the time she had done Mr Duckling came in, and he began; and altogether there was such a hullabaloo, that people began to gather about the door, expecting probably to see me arrested for forgery, if not murder. But Mrs Duckling was not to be comforted. Nothing could compensate her for the loss of her darling pet; and as she repeated this over and over again, she fondled the dead fowl in her bosom, and bathed its body with tears. Mr Duckling, who was a more prosaic sort of person, insisted upon the market value of the article, which he rated at ten shillings, and this amount I gladly gave him to get rid of the exhibition, which had by this time collected quite a crowded audience on the door-step.

But whatever hopes I had of the dog's reformation, they were soon destined to be dashed and disappointed. He had already, I found, acquired a bad repute in the neighbourhood; and it only required the affair of Mrs Duckling's fowl to call forth public opinion respecting him. There was no end of complaints against that dog. He had stolen a chop, worried a cat, attempted to bite a boy, knocked over a child, and done every-

thing bad that a dog could possibly do. In fact, the dog had got a bad name, and I might hang him without judge or jury. But in grateful remembrance of the devotion and attachment which he displayed towards me on that memorable day, when he braved the tide of the Thames for my sake, I stood between him and his detractors manfully; and I would have stood between him and them to the last, had he not shortly afterwards handed me over to my enemies and his, by biting Johnny Smith in the leg. Johnny Smith's mother brought in the mangled body of her hopeful son, and laid it on the hall table. Mrs Brown came in flurried haste to summon me with the intelligence that the dog had actually bit a piece out of Johnny Smith's leg; so Mrs Smith stood over the prostrate form of her son like a female Mark Antony, and eloquently exposed his wrongs and his wounds. As Antony lifted up great Cæsar's mantle, so Mrs Smith turned back her son Johnny's trousers, and, pointing to his injuries, seemed to say, "See what a rent the envious rascal made." There was no piece out of the limb, however, though certainly the young Cæsar's blood had "rushed out of doors," to make the affair look ugly enough.

Mrs Smith's tears and lamentations were po-

sitively heart-rending, until the sight of a sovereign partially restored her. She then partook of a glass of wine, and became quite cheerful. Johnny was taken to the nearest surgeon's, and I heard subsequently that he was seen in the course of the evening playing chuck farthing in his native alley. I may mention, however, that his wound was (according to the report I had at the time) a very long time in healing, and that a great many applications of the golden ointment had to be made before Johnny Smith was finally restored to health. I now felt that in justice to my neighbours I must do away with the dog somehow. The damage done to Johnny Smith was not great, but it might have been greater, and something worse might happen before long.

As the body of Johnny Smith was carried out in the presence of a crowd of excited and sympathizing neighbours, I resolved upon that dog's death. Hot with this resolution, I took down an old pistol and loaded it, calling the dog to follow me to his doom. He came bounding out into the garden like a joyful martyr; and as I stooped to pick up the cap which had fallen from the nipple of the pistol, the unsuspecting brute came and licked my hand—"the hand upraised to slay."

That unmanned me. No; I could not shoot him. I fired off the pistol against the brick wall, and rushed into the house. I could not, however, escape from a sense of the duty which I owed my neighbours. As society at large demanded the punishment and confinement of dangerous criminals, so the neighbourhood demanded that it should be protected from this dangerous dog. I tried to sophisticate the question by every kind of philosophical device, but I could not work out the conclusion, that I could still maintain that dog in liberty consistently with my obligations as a man, a neighbour, and a Christian. That dog must die. Again I resolved it. I procured a deadly poison, and called the dog once more into the garden. I had a piece of bread in my hand, and he followed me eagerly. He snapped up the pieces greedily. At length I threw him a piece into which I had worked a pinch of poison. He jumped at it hungrily, but had no sooner caught it in his mouth than he dropped it, as if it had been fire, and retreated from me with a howl. I called to him to come back, but he ran towards the gate, and as he reached it, turned upon me a look that I shall never forget. The next instant he disappeared.

Next morning, as I came down to breakfast,

Mrs Brown brought up a basket containing a hare, which had been left that morning by the Barnet carrier. There was the kettle hissing on the fire, and there was the newspaper airing on a chair ; but where was my dog ? He was sulky, I supposed, and would not come up. Breakfast had been cleared away, and the boy had come for the paper, but the dog had not yet appeared. I went to look for him. I searched up-stairs and down, in the garden, and in the wash-house. I whistled, I called, but there was no answer. Had Mrs Brown seen the dog ? Well, she had just seen him when she first came down, and he had gone out of the front-door when the carrier called, but she had not seen him since. The day passed, but the dog did not make his appearance ; another passed, and then another, but still no dog. When a whole week had elapsed without our hearing any tidings of the animal, I concluded that he had gone for good. I was willing to think, for good, happy to think, for good ; for by his going voluntarily he had spared my feelings, and delivered me from a painful duty. Mrs Brown ought to have manifested great joy, but she did not ; and I fancy she was rather sorry to lose a comfortable source of occupation for her thoughts and temper.

Some weeks after this, as I happened to be crossing one of the great thoroughfares, I chanced to come upon the Barnet carrier as he was driving homewards. There was a white dog trotting underneath the cart, which, I thought, looked very like my old friend. The cart stopped to take in parcels at the booking office, and I walked up to make a closer inspection. As I drew near, the dog turned round, saw me, and instantly came bounding to meet me. It was my old friend. How he jumped upon me, and fondled me, and sought my caresses! I was gratified, and yet I was not; for I was afraid he might own me again, and stick to me. As he had evidently taken up with the carrier, I was anxious to hear what that individual knew of him.

"That dog, sir," said Mr Bonnet, "ah, he is a rum 'un. It's a curious history, sir, quite a romance like. Four years ago, that dog took up with me in the streets, as I was a goin' on home, —came up to me quite promiscuously, and followed me right away to Barnet; wouldn't go away, no not for the whip. And he stuck to me, that dog, sir, for near four year. But one foggy night, better nor three months ago, he got lost, or cut it of his own accord, somewheres about

Holborn, and I went home without him. Never saw nothin' of him after that, until about a month ago, when I was up your way, and there I found him trotting underneath the cart, just as if he had never been away. Where he came from I can't say; seemed to start up like out of the earth. He appears to know you, sir; but there, that dog knows everybody, he's everybody's dog, I think."

"Or nobody's dog," said I.

"Good night, sir."

"Good night, Mr Bonnet."

The cart drove off, and to my infinite relief the dog, after a parting leap upon me, ran after it. About a week after this, Mr Bonnet had occasion to call on me with another parcel. I looked for the dog, but he was not to be seen. I asked Mr Bonnet about him, and he said,

"He was ailing, had been ailing for near a week, and seemed like as if he was moping and going to die."

I was touched and saddened by this news.

"Poor dog! poor dog!"

Mrs Brown heard me utter these exclamations; and for the first time since the dog's disappearance she ventured to mention the subject. Had I heard anything of the dog? I told her what I had heard; and when I related how the

dog was moping and ailing, she said, "Poor dog," too.

All that winter's night through I was disturbed by a noise which I could not account for. I mentioned this to Mrs Brown in the morning. She had also heard a noise, and fancied several times that it was like some one moaning in pain. It had been a cruel night, and the wind had drifted the snow in heaps into the corners and upon the ledges of the windows. Could any poor houseless wanderer have sought shelter about the place? I went and opened the front door to look out. Gracious heavens! what is this? For some moments I was bereft of utterance; and at length I could only utter a cry. Mrs Brown ran forward with alarm to see what ailed me. I could only point to the door-step. There, his head nestling close to the door and his poor emaciated body covered by a pall of snow, lay nobody's dog. Dead! dead! We stood for some moments contemplating the poor dead beast in silence. At length I saw a tear start into Mrs Brown's eye; it trickled slowly down her cheek, and fell upon the dog's body. That was a gracious drop! Mrs Brown has denied that tear, but I saw it, I saw it fall.

\* \* \* \* \*



My house does not belong to me—I am only a tenant, and some day I may have to leave it. Should it fall into the occupancy of any of those who read this history, let me beg respect for the rough white stone which marks a little green mound at the bottom of the garden. Its signification will be known by the inscription which it bears: “Here lies Nobody’s Dog.”

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**ROBIN.**

A ROBIN came one morning to my window  
And tapp'd ;  
Waiting and looking in wistfully, again  
He rapp'd  
With his little bill,  
Sitting on the sill,  
Until I thought the pane he would have snapp'd.

I was at breakfast, feasting quite regardless  
Of cost,  
On every delicacy of the season,  
And lost  
(In my chair of state  
Close up by the grate)  
Alike to blinding snow and biting frost.

When I had disposed of egg and cutlet,  
I said,  
Turning me towards the robin at the window,

“ O Red-

Breast, wretched robin

Sitting there bobbin’,

I fear me, while *I* feast, *thou’rt* wanting bread.”

I rose, and plentifully scatter’d crumbs on

The snow,

Robin prudently retiring for the time

To know

Whether my intent

Were in honour meant,

Or hid a trap in charitable show.

Encouraged by my smiles, or by his hunger,

He hopp’d

Up on the ledge again with hopeful flutter,

And dropp’d

On that store of crumbs,

Picking them like plums

From the snow pudding upon which he’d popp’d.

I saw him eat his fill with satisfaction,

The deed

Appearing meritorious and kindly :

In need,

To this robin red

I had cast my bread ;

Approving conscience would bestow my meed.

And now he came each morning regularly  
Tapping ;  
Twittering and looking in wistfully, and  
Rapping  
On the window sill,  
With his little bill,  
My feast of crumbs greedily up-snapping.

That red-breast to protect and feed and cherish  
I swore—  
He should have a breakfast every morning from  
My store.

“ My red-breasted pet  
I ne’er will forget,  
No, never, never :” it was thus I swore.

\* \* \* \* \*

One day a friend gave me an invitation,  
I went :  
He had great store of choice wines and cigars, and  
I spent  
With him sev'ral days,  
Liking my friend's ways,  
But chiefly on his rare old port intent.

\* \* \* \* \*

Again at breakfast in my parlour sitting :  
                        “ Robin !

Whither art gone, my pet ? I see thee not a-  
Bobbin' : ”

I looked out—a start !  
And into my heart  
I felt a thousand thorns sharply jobbin' !

His red breast, like a gout of gore accusing,  
Upturn'd,  
The robin lay in death in snow enshrouded ;  
Then burn'd  
A red spot of shame,  
A deep brand of blame  
Upon my cheek, while bitterly I mourned.

Slowly and sadly in a red flower-pot I  
Laid him,  
Covering him lightly with mother-earth, I  
Bade him  
To rest *in p  ce*  
In that red vase he  
Slept in ; while I sepulchral honours paid him.

I planted a sprig of white rose o'er his grave  
All hush'd ;  
In Spring it budded and in the Summer bloom'd,  
And blush'd  
A deep crimson red

Over the bird's bed,  
As though with his breast's hue it had been flush'd.

And now with Winter's wind that leafless twig  
comes

Tapping  
Upon the pane, stretching my heart's strings unto  
Snapping :

Sitting in my room  
In Night's silent gloom,  
I know it is the Robin's spirit rapping !

## A CHRISTMAS FAIRY.

I AM a call-boy, and I have been a call-boy ever since I was ten. I am five-and-forty now, and getting old and grizzled, but still a call-boy, and I dare say I shall remain a call-boy to the end of my days. In my line we never grow to be men. It's always "boy" to the last, if we were to live to be as old as Methuselah. It was the same with the post-boys. They were nearly always little chaps, and in their caps and jackets looked just like juveniles. I have heard it was gin taken with their pap that did it in their case—I mean stopped their growth. In ours I think it's owing to the gas. I should say I have lived pretty nigh twenty years of my life by gaslight. I go to the theatre every night at six o'clock, and never leave until twelve, and most of the time I stand under the reflector on the first landing of the dressing-room staircase. It's monotonous kind of work to stand there night after night for so many hours,

listening to the pieces that I know all by heart, and calling up-stairs to the actors when they're wanted to go on. It's dry work, too; for the gas is very hot, and the dust comes up from the stage when they change the scenes.

I have seen a good deal of life, though, from that landing; and I am sorry now that I didn't begin to keep a diary five-and-twenty years ago. It would have been worth something to publish by this time. There's not many that have been so long in the line as I have. Call-boys mostly become low comedians or clowns. You see, they stand a very good chance if they have any talent and ambition. They're always on the spot if anything happens, and they know all the parts from hearing them night after night. Perhaps an actor is taken ill some night at the last moment, and the stage is waiting. What's to be done? There is nobody who knows the part. Well; the call-boy hears all this, and if he has any pluck in him he says, "I know the part—I don't mind going on for it;" and perhaps at that moment the audience is getting very impatient, and the manager says, "Very well, get into the things, and look sharp," and on he goes, and perhaps makes a hit.

After that you may depend upon it he will not



be content to be a call-boy ; and perhaps the manager is only too glad of a chance of playing him off, cheap, against the leading man. Lots of call-boys have got on in this way, but most of them have become pantomimists. Call-boys are generally good at hanky-panky. I might have been a clown myself, for I have practised all clown's tumbling tricks on my landing during what I call my waits. But I never had any ambition, leastwise no spirit ; and so it is that I have never risen.

Still, for all that, there are persons of less importance in the theatre than me. In my own way I have a good deal of influence, and know more of what is going on than any one. Everybody in the theatre, from the supers and ballet-girls up to the manager himself, has to pass under my eye on their way up to the dressing-rooms, and as they all depend upon me for their "calls," they are all civil. "Good evening, Robert." "How are you to-night, Robert?" I get that from everybody, even from the manager himself, who, though he has bullied everybody else in the theatre, has never bullied me. That's one of the advantages of being call-boy.

I am a sort of neutral in the place. Nobody is jealous of me ; and my position at the bottom

of the stairs gives me opportunities of doing many people favours. The tip-top members of the company will come to me sometimes and say, "Robert, is he in his room?" meaning the manager. I know pretty well what they want to see him about—a re-engagement, a benefit, a new part, or something of that sort—and I say "Yes, he is in his room; but he is in an awful bad temper to-night." And they understand what that means, and don't go near him. And then again another time I will say, "Do you want to see him?" and they'll say, "Yes;" and then I'll say, "You'll find him in his room; there's nobody with him, and he's in a first-rate temper to-night." And they say "Thank you, Robert," and perhaps drop me sixpence or a shilling to wash the dust out of my throat; for I always tell everybody that passes that it's very dry at that corner. Ah! I'll be bound to say I have saved many a poor girl her engagement by sending her up just at the right time. I always know by his face what sort of a tune the manager is in, and he can't get up to his room without passing me.

Perhaps you wouldn't believe it, now; but I have been the making of one or two dramatic authors in my time. Managers don't care much about dramatic authors, and always keep out of

their way if they can. Even such as have the *entrée* behind the scenes can't always get at the manager. The doorkeeper has the same sort of favour for a dramatic author that a watch-dog has for a burglar. If an author asks for the manager at the stage-door, he is almost certain to be told that he is not in the house. But if he comes to me and behaves civil, I can put him in the way of getting what he wants—which is a quiet minute or two with the manager to talk about his piece.

I remember a young man coming to me night after night to ask for him, but as he was a stranger to me, I always said the manager was engaged, or wasn't in, or some fib of that sort, which it is part of the duty of theatre officials to tell. At last, however, my heart softened towards him, for he was a polite, kind-spoken young man, and always carried a roll of paper in his breast-pocket, which I guessed was a play of some kind which he wanted produced. One night, when I sent him away with the usual answer, he looked so disappointed that I felt for once quite ashamed of having told the usual lie. When he came again the manager was really not in; but I told him to go and sit in the green-room, and I would let him know when he came. He did so, and when the manager arrived I took the young man up to his

room and knocked at the door, and left him there to manage the rest for himself. He remained in the room nearly half an hour, and when he came down his cheeks were flushed and his eyes sparkled, and he shook me kindly by the hand and thanked me.

A short time afterwards he had a piece produced at our house. It was a great success, and he has had many successes since at our house and others. You know his name very well; all the town knows it; but perhaps it would never have been known at all but for me. However, he is welcome to all I did for him; for he is a gentleman, and is not above leaving the big folks and coming and offering his hand to Robert the call-boy, and asking him what he'll take to wash the dust down. I have known others again come to me in a grand bumptious sort of way that I wouldn't have moved a finger to serve. I might have helped them to what they wanted many a time, if they had only been a little civil, and treated the call-boy like a fellow-creature.

Ah, sir, I have seen some very real life behind these canvas scenes. Grief and suffering and pain have many a night passed up those stairs when you have seen all smiling and light-hearted in front. The friends and acquaintances of my

life have been made on this landing under the reflector. (I am speaking as if I were standing there now.) I have known them here, mixed with them here, conversed with them here, and nowhere else. This strip of boarding and these stairs have been my world. And friends and acquaintances that I have made here have grown old, and seen joy and sorrow, and passed away to the grave, and I have missed them only in their relation to these stairs, which they have gone up and down o' nights in their paint and strange dresses.

In all my time there was only one person belonging to the theatre that I knew outside it, and that was old Peter Doyle the Pantaloon. He lived near me over the water, close to Vauxhall Bridge; and at pantomime time we used to walk home together. Peter's poor bit of a lodging over yonder was the scene of a drama in real life that I have never seen equalled on the stage; and I have seen a few dramas in my time, as you may believe. Peter had been Pantaloon at our house for years, and he continued to be engaged for Christmas long after he was past his work. He was like Herr von Joel, and was retained on the establishment in consideration of his long and faithful services.

But a Christmas came when even long and faithful services would no longer balance Peter's infirmity, which was a lame leg, and he was told when he sent in his application that he wouldn't be wanted. I was sorry for Peter, for he was a great crony of mine, and he had a wife and family to keep, the youngest a girl, being only nine years of age. You see Peter was not such a very old man, but he had had a bad accident in the country from falling through a trap, and that and rheumatism crippled him; and as you can imagine, a crippled Pantaloon ain't much use. I missed Peter sadly, for he dressed in a little room close by my landing, and I often used to run in and have a chat with him. He had all sorts of queer ways, and no end of funny stories to tell.

You may know what a quaint kind of character he was when I tell you how he used to get his supper. The people about the neighbourhood all knew him, for Peter was fond of looking in at their shop windows and chatting to them, though he never bought much. The butcher round the corner was a particular friend of Peter's, and always cut him a good big quarter of a pound of steak, and didn't charge him too much for it. But one night Peter was rather short of the

browns, as he called them. He had only threepence. "What am I to do, Robert?" he said; "if I pay for the steak I shall have nothing left for the buster and the beer." He always called a penny loaf a "buster."

"Well," I said, "stick it up, Peter."

"No, no, lad," said Peter; "I don't like getting into debt; it's against my principle, and, as somebody said, my interest. No, that won't do; but here, I'll tell you what—Take that penny and ask the old woman"—that was the old woman who did the "cleaning"—"to go round and give my compliments to Mr Collins, and ask him for a penn'orth of meat for my dog."

"But you havn't got a dog, Peter," I said.

"Oh yes, I have," he said; "a regular performing dog—sits up on his hind legs all day long, and always ready for his victuals. You just see how he'll put away the penn'orth of meat."

Well, I gave the old woman Peter's penny, and sent her round, and she came back with a great piece of beef as big as my hand.

"There's a penn'orth, Peter," I said.

"By Jove, yes," he said; "that's more than I get for threepence for myself. That's 'love me love my dog,' and no mistake. Where's the gridiron?" And Peter put the gridiron on the

fire and cooked the beef; and when I came in again presently I found him eating it.

"You see the animal feeding," said Peter; "will you have a bit? It's my belief he's cut it off the rump, for it's as tender as a chicken." After this Peter never sent for a quarter of a pound for himself, but always for a penn'orth for his dog.

It was a sad blow to Peter when he got the manager's letter; for he had counted on his engagement as usual, and had made all his little arrangements. However, the company subscribed a little money for him, and the manager offered to take his little daughter Rose on for a fairy in the pantomime. Peter was doatingly fond of Rose. She was the youngest of his family, and the only girl; the others being great louts of boys, who always kept the poor old chap in hot water.

Peter did not much like his little darling going on the stage without some one to look after her; but when the manager told him that he might come to the theatre every night and look after her himself, he was reconciled to it, and little Rose was engaged. It was a matter of no consequence except to Peter himself, for Rose only went on in a group of little fairies, and there



was a whole regiment of mothers waiting every morning at the stage-door with no end of little candidates for such parts. It was, however, of very great consequence to Peter ; for Rose was engaged at a salary of seven shillings a week—they gave her more than the usual figure for her father's sake—and as Peter was doing nothing, this helped to keep the pot a-boiling. For the matter of that I fully believe that all that went into Peter's pot that winter came out of Rose's seven shillings.

Little Rose was very quick at learning, and the ballet-master took a fancy to her, and put her in the front row ; and the people in front soon began to notice her, she was so pretty. Peter brought her to the theatre every evening, and came again when the pantomime was over and took her home ; but he rarely came in.

He didn't like to be "behind" with us all, knowing that he was no longer one of us, and had nothing to do in the theatre. He used to wait at a public-house close by, where he was well known, and it didn't cost him much for his beer there. There was a lot of young fellows frequented the house who felt it a privilege to treat Peter. Peter would no sooner go in and show his comical face than it would be—"What will

you take, Peter?" from half-a-dozen of them at once. And Peter would answer in his quaint way, "Well, since you are so kind, I will take two D of gin, cold, and a little leaf;" which meant two pennyworth of cold gin-and-water and a paper of tobacco.

But to go on with my story. At the end of the run of the pantomime little Rose was discharged, with many more whose services would not to be required until Christmas came round again. Peter was thrown on his beam-ends. Now that Rose's salary was gone there was nothing coming in at all. Peter began to look about for something to do. He offered himself at one or two of the minor theatres for utility business; but his lameness was against him, and no one would have him. He tried to get pupils for the stage, but most of the amateurs aspired to the higher walks of the drama, and who would go to a broken-down Pantaloon to learn to read Shakespeare? Then he thought of setting up a photographic shop; but the expense of the glass-house and apparatus was more than he could manage. Peter could find nothing to turn his hand to, and he took it very much to heart, and became low and desponding. At length, however, something turned up. He came to me one

Sunday morning with a bright face to tell me all about it.

"Robert," he said, "I've met with an opening at last."

I said I was glad to hear it, and asked what it was.

"What do you think, Robert?"

"Can't say, I'm sure," I said; "anything in your own line?"

"No, not exactly," he said.

"Elocution?"

"No."

"Photographs?"

"No; but you'll never guess, Robert. What do you say to the darky business?"

"The darky business!" I said; "whatever do you mean, Peter?"

"Why," he said, "the nigger serenading line."

"Lor', Peter," I said; "you must be joking."

"Not a bit of it," he said; "you know I can play the banjo; and I've an offer to join a troupe; and why not? I must do something to support my family."

"How did you hear of it?" I said.

And then he told me all about it.

"You know the chap with the wooden leg

that lodges at the sweep's, next door but one. You've often seen him playing the tambourine in a band of niggers. Well, yesterday I saw him coming along, with his face washed, and dressed in his best Sunday-going suit; and I said, knowing him, from being a neighbour—

“ ‘Hallo, William! what's up?’ ”

“ ‘I am going to bury the banjo,’ he says.

“ ‘Bury the banjo?’ I says; ‘whatever do you mean, William?’ ”

“ ‘Oh,’ he says, ‘Joe Barton, as played the banjo in our band, is dead, and we're going to bury him to-day down at Woking. It's a bad job for us. I don't know what we shall do without him.’ ”

“ ‘What Bill said set me a-thinking, and I watched for him when he came back in the afternoon. I saw that he was a bit screwed as he came by, and I did not speak to him then; but I called in at his lodgings after tea, and found him sitting in a chair, with his head resting in his hands.

“ ‘You're not very well, William,’ I said.

“ ‘No,’ he said; ‘I can't help thinking of poor Joe as we laid under the earth to-day. I took a goodish drop of drink on the road home; but it hasn't improved my spirits, but rather the

contrairy. Joe and me were great friends—brothers, I may say. He left me all that belonged to him. There's the legacy in the corner there; I shan't have to pay any duty on it.'

"The legacy was Joe's serenading clothes—a long-tailed blue coat, a pair of bed-curtain trousers, and a white hat with crape round it. They lay in a heap, with poor Joe's banjo on the top.

"I took up the instrument, and ran my fingers over the strings. Bill took no notice for a minute or so, until I began to play 'Uncle Ned,' when he looked up at me curiously.

"'By Jove!' he said, 'you can play it.'

"'Yes,' I said; 'I can a little; but I am rather out of practice. If I could get anything to do at it I should soon get my hand in again.'

"'What!' he said, 'You don't mean to say that *you*——'

"'Why not?' I said, 'I can't get anything to do in my own line, and beggars mustn't be choosers; besides, I think I rather should like the line.'

"'You would?' he said, eagerly.

"'Yes,' I said, 'I would.'

"'What do you say, then, to joining us, and taking poor Joe's place?'

"I said, 'I'm your man.'

"Well, the upshot of it was that Bill introduced me to the other members of the troupe, and I played a tune or two to them, and they said I would do with a little practice; and to-morrow night I am going to rehearse with them at Bill's lodgings, and the day after we open for the season. And now what do you think of it?"

"Well," I said, "Peter, it's honest; and I dare say there's a good bit of money to be picked up at it."

"Yes," he said, "there is; Bill told me that one rainy day about a month ago they played the whole of an afternoon up a court in the Strand, and took two pound fourteen. The only thing that troubles me is the wife."

"How do you mean?" I said.

"Well," he said, "she mightn't like it. Her father, you see, was a master pork-butcher in the Walworth Road, and she's rather proud."

"Well," I said, "I wouldn't tell her about it for a bit."

"No," he said, "that's just how I mean to act. I'll keep it dark as long as I can; and perhaps the ha'pence will reconcile her."

So Peter joined the troupe, and went to work, and did very well. Dressed up as a ducky, with

his face blacked, nobody recognized him but me ; and of course I kept the secret. His wife, however, after a bit began to wonder how he got all the money ; for he sometimes took home as much as seven or eight shillings for a day's work. Peter put her off as long as he could ; but she got to close quarters with him at last, for she was proud, and honester than most in her station. Peter told me all about how she found him out. She was quite huffed with him because he would not tell her what he did ; and one night, when they had quarrelled and made it up again, she said to him with tears in her eyes—

“ I hope you are not a thief, Peter, dear ? ”

Peter laughed at first at the idea of the thing ; but got indignant at last, and told her that his employment was honest, though humble—very humble.

“ Very humble,” she said ; “ then I know what it is, Peter.”

“ Well, what ? ” he said.

“ Why,” she said, “ I have noticed that every night when you come home, you have a black rim all round your neck, and smudges of black about your ears. You don't like to tell me, Peter, but I know what you have done ; you have turned chimney-sweep.”

Peter could not help roaring with laughter at this ; but the wife and he got so thick that night that he was obliged to confess. She didn't like it, and talked a good deal about her father the pork-butcher ; but when Peter turned out his pockets, she dried her tears, and they had a nice hot supper, and agreed to say nothing more about it, and keep the secret from little Rose.

Peter did very well in the summer-time ; but in the winter it was all over with the outdoor nigger-serenading business. The troupe had then to look out for engagements at parties ; but there were not many of them to be got. So Peter was very thankful when little Rose was taken on again at the theatre to play in the pantomime.

She was engaged to play a fairy, and represent the Queen of the Flowers in the transformation scene. As she had to stand upon a piece of wood that rose through the stage nearly to the flies, Peter came in every night to see her securely strapped on ; and then he would wait chatting with me until the scene was over, and little Rose was ready to go home. One night, however, Peter had an engagement, and did not come. As bad luck would have it little Rose got very nervous, let go her hold upon the iron bar, and fell



head downwards, hanging to the scene by her strapped foot. The accident occurred just as the curtain was coming down upon the red fire ; and the people in front knew nothing about it. I was the first to run to Rose's assistance. Poor thing ! she was badly bruised and cut with the projecting pieces of the scene, and her arms were bleeding. A carpenter held her up while I unstrapped her foot, and we took her into the housekeeper's room and laid her on a sofa. The manager came in in great excitement, and was for sending her to the hospital ; but little Rose, when she recovered a little, asked for her father, and said she would rather go home. Peter not being there, the manager asked if any one knew where he lived ; and I said I did.

"Very well," he said ; "you get a cab and take her home, and send for a doctor to her at my expense. I don't think now she is so much hurt as frightened."

So a cab was called, and little Rose was helped into it ; and I went away home with her, leaving word with the stage-door keeper to find out Peter and let him know what had happened.

Mrs Doyle was in a terrible way when I took the poor girl home, and cried and wrung her hands in great distress. However, when she

heard Rose speak she stirred up a little, and undressed her and put her to bed, while I ran out for the doctor. The doctor—a very young man—came in directly; but when he saw Rose, and I told him the nature of the accident, he said she ought to be taken to the hospital at once, as it was very serious. Mrs Doyle, however, would not hear of this; and the doctor said in that case he must call in another surgeon; and giving some directions to Mrs Doyle, he hurried away for that purpose. Mrs Doyle was now very much alarmed. Rose lay in the bed as pale as death, her eyes closed and her white lips slightly parted. There were no signs of life about her except the red scores upon her arms, which had been bruised and torn by the rough woodwork of the platform from which she had fallen.

“Good God!” Mrs Doyle exclaimed, “she is dead!”

At that moment there was a noise of hurried footsteps on the stairs, and some one entered. It was Peter in his nigger serenader’s dress, with his face blacked, and his banjo in his hand. He caught the terrible word “dead,” and rushed to the bedside. He threw his hat and his banjo from him, and dropped upon his knees, taking Rose’s cold white hand in his.

“My Rose! my dear, darling Rose!” he cried; “dead! no, no, no; it cannot be. Rose, Rose, speak to me, darling! speak to me!”

In his frantic energy he pulled the poor girl towards him, but her body was like a dead thing, and when he relaxed his hold upon her hand it fell upon the counterpane like lead.

Peter rose as if suddenly horror-struck, and sank into a chair. He sat there for some moments speechless, gazing in a stupified way at his darling’s blanched and motionless face, and the big tears rolled from his eyes and made white courses down his blackened face as they fell. At length he started up wildly, and cried, “Yes, yes, she is dead, and it was I who killed her; I, her father! I was not there to see her safe to-night, as I ought to have been. If I had been there, this would not have happened. I—I have done it.” And he sank into the chair again, and hid his face in his hands, and sobbed like a child.

It was a strange, pitiful sight to see;—a father in that fantastic dress associated only with mockery and antics and nonsense, sitting there crushed, and broken, and weeping.

But Rose was not dead. When the doctors came in and gave her a restorative, she revived and opened her eyes. Peter was for rushing to

clasp her in his arms, but I held him back, pointing to his dress.

"You will only frighten her, Peter," I said; "she has never seen you like this." But he would not listen, and rushed to the bedside. Rose saw the strange figure, and shrank back and uttered a feeble scream. Peter turned away immediately, and ran from the room, tearing the fantastic rags from his body as if he had been mad. He came back presently, his face hastily washed, and in his own clothes. Rose had revived in the mean time, and she knew him now, and gladdened poor Peter's heart with a smile and the whispered word "father." He was frantic with joy. But he had still a bitter grief in store for him. His darling Rose, his pet, his pride, the hope of the family—nay, its stay and support—was crippled for life.

Poor Peter's prospect was now a very dark one; but things came round in a strange way to bring help to him and happiness to others. What I am going to tell now came to my knowledge as I stood on my landing at the bottom of the stairs. After Rose's accident, the actors and actresses, as they went up and down, constantly asked me about her, and nearly every one of them sent her a little money. Actors are very kind-hearted in that

way. But of all the persons in the theatre, no one took so much interest in Rose as Miss Everton. You remember what a favourite Miss Everton was at this theatre some few years ago. When she came here from the country she took everybody by storm, for she was not only a very clever actress, but she was very handsome and very pretty. All the young fellows about town were mad after her, and they filled the stalls night after night to see her.

I took a great liking to Miss Everton from the first, for she was always very friendly and very chatty, and her success made no difference in her. But I trembled for her sometimes, when I saw how she was run after by the young swells. I knew that she was in the midst of a great blazing fire of temptation, for the stage-door was beset every night by her admirers, and a fast young baronet, who was privileged to come behind the scenes, fairly laid siege to her, and brought her all sorts of expensive presents. One night it was a ring, and the next a pair of bracelets; and she always showed them to me as she came up-stairs, and how her eyes did sparkle over them, woman-like! But I knew that these presents boded no good to her, for the young baronet was a notorious rake. However, I was glad to believe, from what

I saw, that she kept them all at a safe distance, until one night I overheard a conversation between her and Sir William in the green-room. As I stood close to the green-room door, and they talked pretty loud, I could not help overhearing what they said. Miss Everton was dressed to go home, and I heard her say :

“I must bid you good-night, Sir William.”

“No, no ; don’t go yet,” he said. “I can’t bear to part with you.”

“Oh, but I must,” she said ; “it’s getting late.”

“So it is,” he said ; “and you are going alone.”

“Yes,” she said. “I always go alone.”

“That’s not right,” he said. “You are too young, too beautiful ; allow me to be your squire.”

She said gaily that she couldn’t think of it ; but he pressed her, and praised her beauty, and said he loved her to distraction, and acted the false part that he had acted many a time before. I stood in fear and trembling, and could hear my heart beat within me ; for Miss Everton was not protesting now, and presently I heard her say, in a resolute way, as if she had made up her mind, “Very well, Sir William, you shall be my squire to-night ; you shall see me home.”

I have often wondered why those words should have given me such pain. I felt them like a stab in the heart. I can only suppose that I was in love, in a humble way, with Miss Everton myself.

Miss Everton and Sir William came out, and he gave her his arm, and as she passed me she said "Good night," quite gaily, and her face was flushed, and her eyes sparkled as if in triumph.

I felt cold at heart, and could have cried. The poor moth!

I never had any ambition until that moment, and then I wished that I were manager, that I might say to Miss Everton—"Remain here, I wish to speak to you." But she passed out, leaning on Sir William's arm.

What followed is no secret now.

Sir William called a cab, and they got into it together; but when they had proceeded a little way, Miss Everton called to the man to stop at a pastrycook's shop. She got out, saying to Sir William that she was going to buy something for supper. Sir William of course offered to pay, but she would not allow him. She insisted upon buying and paying for everything herself. She bought a fowl, a shape of jelly, and a bottle of wine, and giving directions to the driver, got into the cab again.

"Oh, sha'n't we be jolly," said Sir William.

"It will be quite a treat, won't it?" said Miss Everton.

"And with you to grace the meal—" Sir William was proceeding with a fine speech, when he noticed that the cab was going across one of the bridges.

"I thought, Miss Everton," he said, "you lived at St John's Wood."

"Yes," she said, "I live there with my mother; but I have a friend over the water."

"Ah, I see," said Sir William, delighted.

The cab turned through some narrow, dirty streets.

"Your friend, my dear Miss Everton," said Sir William, "does not appear to live in a very aristocratic quarter of the town."

"No," she said; "but my friend has good reasons for that."

"Oh, I see," said Sir William. "Well, I'll bet a wager she is not so pretty as you are."

"Yes, Sir William, she is prettier."

"Oh, nonsense, I won't believe that," he said.

"Well, Sir William, you shall judge for yourself; we are there."

The cab had stopped at a dark and narrow passage. Miss Everton paid the cabman, and



told Sir William to follow her. He was too much astonished now to offer to pay for her, or to do anything but stare in wonder.

"It is very dark here," said Miss Everton ; "but I know the way ; take my hand, and I will conduct you."

At another time Sir William would have been enraptured to take her hand, but he half hesitated now.

"What," she said, "are you afraid to take my hand and follow me ?"

"No, no," he said, gaily ; "but it seems so odd, you know. I could not of course imagine that you had friends here."

Miss Everton knocked at a door at the end of the passage. It was opened by an elderly woman, who recognized her, and mentioned her by name. Miss Everton gave her a significant look, and said aloud, "I have brought a friend ; can we go up-stairs ?"

The woman said "Yes," and held the light while Sir William and Miss Everton went up, the former wondering at the bare walls and the general poverty-stricken aspect of the place. At the top of the stairs, Miss Everton knocked at a latched door, and a man's voice said, "Come in."

They entered, Miss Everton still leading Sir William by the hand. It was a poorly-furnished bed-chamber, in the corner of which, on a truckle bed, lay a sick child, while an old man sat by the bedside watching her.

"I have come to see little Rose, Peter," Miss Everton said. "And I have brought a friend who has often inquired for her."

And then she went up to little Rose and kissed her, and asked her if she was better; and Rose smiled and thanked her, and said she was much better now.

"And see, Rose," she said, "a kind gentleman has come to see you; he has brought a chicken for you, and a jelly, and some wine; you must take some now, it will do you good."

And she went and took the things from Sir William, and spread a cloth upon the bed, and fed Rose with her own hands. And Sir William sat in a chair gazing at her, saying never a word, and making no sign, until his eyes filled with tears, when he rose and turned away to hide them. Those were tears of grace. They made that rake and libertine a man. When her mission of love and charity was over, Miss Everton took him by the hand once more, and led him down old Peter's poor stairs and out into the dark dirty

street. And there, under heaven, he fell down on his knees before her, and humbly kissed her hand and said, "Lady, forgive me!"

Very shortly afterwards, Miss Everton quitted the stage and became Lady William Hartley. She is a happy wife and mother now, and Sir William is a happy husband, and they have not forgotten old Peter and his crippled daughter Rose. Who knows how it might have been but for the misfortune of that poor little Christmas Fairy!

## STORY OF AN UMBRELLA.

It was my good fortune, as an umbrella, to be born—made, if you like—in the latter half of the nineteenth century. I say it was my good fortune, because I consider that all umbrellas that were born antecedent to the nineteenth century, and, particularly, antecedent to the first years of the latter half of it, were benighted and barbarous umbrellas, utterly without those opportunities of culture and civilization which render the umbrellas of the present day so presentable and companionable in all circles of society, from the highest to the lowest. I have no hesitation in saying that the last generation of umbrellas was a gross and vulgar one. The way in which it asserted its whalebone and gingham existence was an offence against all delicacy. They were stout and sturdy umbrellas, it is true, as their masters were, and they withstood any quantity of rain, as their masters withstood any quantity of

port; but they were not fit to go into polite society. No one thought of taking them there. They were invariably left in the hall or sent into the kitchen to drip themselves dry among the coals. Now, though I am occasionally subjected to the same indignity when it rains, yet, when it is dry, I am not unfrequently taken into the dining-room; nay, even into the drawing-room and the boudoir. I have lain on a drawing-room table many a time in company with a Paris hat and a pair of straw-coloured gloves; and I have never been ordered out. I am sure if my grandfather had intruded so far, he would have been kicked down-stairs without ceremony. You see I am a genteel umbrella, slim and silk; whereas my grandfather was a vulgar umbrella, gross and gingham. Possibly the physical composition of my ancestor offered the maximum of the useful; but if I offer the minimum of that same, I afford at the same time the maximum of the ornamental. My first peeps at life were taken from the window of a hosier, glover, and general outfitter, in the Burlington Arcade. Reclining in the window all day long, with my head comfortably supported by the frame, I had excellent opportunities of studying life. At first, the life which passed before my eyes puzzled me not a little. The shop oppo-

site exposed jewelry in one window and walking-sticks in the other. How did it so often happen that when a lady went in to purchase a bead bracelet, a gentleman immediately came up, peered through the window for a moment, and then entered to purchase a cane? At the emporium which combined Berlin wool and music, the same coincidences were frequently observable. The sight of a lady purchasing a hair-net, almost daily reminded a gentleman that he wanted the last new song; albeit, I am bound to say that the gentleman did not appear to have a singing face. My experience of the world, from what I saw of it from that window in the Burlington Arcade, led me to believe that the human race generally had nothing to do but to walk about in the most fashionable clothes, and look in at shop-windows.

However, in about a month after my introduction to Arcadian life, I was destined to make the acquaintance of the outside world. I was purchased one day by an elderly gentleman, who took me home to a fashionable house in Belgravia, and presented me to his son, who I learned was about to return to Eton. So, in a week's time, I went to Eton with my young master, and lived a very quiet and uneventful life, until there

occurred a certain incident, which I shall always look back upon with satisfaction, and mention with pride. My master was walking out with me in the neighbourhood of the college on a bright afternoon in April, when the sky became suddenly overcast, and rain began to fall. Almost at the same moment, two ladies, attended by a servant, appeared at a turning of the road. The party were without umbrellas, and the ladies were throwing their shawls over their heads to protect them from the shower. My young master, seeing this, went up, and politely offered my services, which were gladly accepted, it being intimated at the same time that I should be duly returned to him at the college. I accompanied the ladies home, and was not a little astonished to find that their destination was Windsor Castle, and that one of the two ladies to whom I had the honour of affording shelter was no less a person than the Queen of England. You may imagine the delight of my young master when I was returned to him with this intimation, accompanied by the gift of a sovereign bran new from the mint. My young master now became more attached to me and more proud of me than ever. He had a hole made in the sovereign, and attached it to his watch-guard, and commemorated my honours by

having the letters V. R. engraved on my handle. Discern the mark of them.

When my young master left Eton to go to Oxford he brought me with him to town, and showed me with great pride to his relations. When there was company I was brought in, and handed round, and the people seemed to take great delight in handling me. When I was not being shown to company, I was locked up in a glass-case in the old gentleman's library. Here I was so closely mewed up that I was afraid I was destined never to see the outer world again. But one day the old gentleman came and unlocked the case, and handing me over to my young master, said, "Now, Alfred, you may take it to show your uncle, but mind you don't lose it." Alfred promised faithfully that I should never quit his sight, and set off with me to his uncle's in Bedford-square, where I was handed about and admired in the usual manner. When he left his uncle's, where he had perhaps taken more wine than was good for him, he hailed a Hansom, and was driven to his own door.

He got out hurriedly, threw the man a shilling, and—left me behind him! He had no sooner disappeared into the house, than the driver opened the little trap in the roof and looked down



into the cab. He shut the trap again quickly, and I could feel by the swaying of the vehicle, that he was getting off his box. The next instant he appeared in the front of the cab, seized me, mounted his box again quickly, and drove off at a rapid pace.

When the day broke I found myself in a loft, where there was no furniture but a truckle-bed and a large deal chest. In the course of the morning I was given by the cabman to a slatternly woman, who rolled me up in brown paper and took me away. She walked with me for quite an hour, and I was unconscious of anything that was taking place around me until I was unrolled and laid upon a mahogany counter, when I heard the following colloquy:—

“Eighteen.”

“Oh! no, come, that won’t do.”

“Well, fifteen; it’s bran new, never been used.”

“Couldn’t do it.”

“Well, surely ten.”

“I can make it seven.”

“Oh! nonsense; ten.”

“Seven’s all I can give.”

“It’s a downright shame; say seven-and-six.”

“Seven.”

“Well, make out the ticket.”

I was wrapped up in a piece of calico, and, in the course of the afternoon, a piece of string was attached to my neck ; and I felt myself going up—up what I don't know ; but when I got to the end of my ascent, I found myself in a very close room. Here I was condemned for several weeks to musty solitude, without seeing a human being, save a young man of a dark and dingy aspect who came in every now and then with pieces of card-board in his hand, and took articles, chiefly in the form of bundles, away with him. I conceived the idea that the bundles were all prisoners, and that the tickets which the dingy young man brought up in his hand were their orders of release. The prisoners who seemed to have most interest at head-quarters—with the chaplain or the governor, perhaps—took the shape of flat-irons. These individuals were constantly being released ; but they must have been very incorrigible characters indeed, for they were always being brought back again. During the comparatively short time that I remained in durance, I counted fourteen convictions against one hardened sinner. He generally came in on Friday evening ; and, whether it was that his conduct during the Sunday was considered highly exemplary, or that he was

highly connected, and had interest, I cannot say, but he generally managed to obtain his ticket-of-leave in the course of Monday—certainly never later than Tuesday afternoon. An individual, who took the form of a black frock-coat, was consigned to an adjoining cell regularly every Monday morning, and was as regularly liberated every Saturday. I have known a very elegant *moiré-antique* gown committed as many as four times within a month. Waistcoats, and boots, and flannel petticoats, and shawls, and shirts, and trousers, and, indeed, every article of attire, male and female, joined our company, excepting only hats. I never saw a hat all the time I was in prison; from which I inferred that the great hat community was either uncommonly virtuous, or had somehow or other obtained a bill of exemption from the common fate of costume. Regarding myself as a prisoner, I wondered when I should have my ticket-of-leave, for I pined to be restored to the world and to society. At length, the day arrived. The dingy young man came in one afternoon, with an order of release in his hand—only one on this occasion—and looked about him doubtfully. Was it for the hardened sinner in the corner yonder, or the black frock-coat (for it was Saturday), or the *moiré-antique*, or me?

It was for me. I was taken down-stairs, unrolled from my calico-covering, and handed across the counter to a genteel young man, who immediately walked away with me; and that evening I found myself reclining in a corner in the green-room of a theatre.

I soon learned that my master was an actor; for in the course of the evening he came in in a different dress from that in which I had previously seen him, with his cheeks very pink, and a light-coloured wig on, parted down the middle. He took me from the corner and, dangling me in his hand, stood looking at himself in the glass until a boy ran in and cried, "Mr Dawdle called," when my master rushed out with me in his hand, and the next instant I found myself in a great blaze of light, with a dim vision before me of countless heads and a sea of white faces. My master did not say much during the play that night, nor, indeed, on any occasion during the year that I remained in his service. He drawled a good deal and stroked his moustache, but never delivered more than one sentence at a time; such as "Ah! 'pon honour, how d'ye do." "Just what I was going to say." "Shouldn't wonder, weally."

Such having been the monotony of my master's stage life, I will not weary you with its details;

but rather dwell upon my experiences of the real world which I have found infinitely more strange than anything I ever met with in the realms of fiction. I was rather astonished to find that my master, whom, judging by his attire, I had imagined to be a person of consequence, lived not in a fine house in a fashionable quarter of the town, but in a single room on the third floor of a house in Soho. I was no less surprised to discover, by going with him to the treasury on Saturday, that his salary at the theatre was only twenty-five shillings a week.

But though my master lived in a single third-floor room, and was a person of no account at home, he rose into very considerable importance when he turned his back upon Soho and mixed in the world. He was always well, nay, fashionably dressed, and any one who did not know what I did, might have imagined that he was an independent gentleman.

My master did not live expensively, you may be sure. His resort for amusement, after the theatre, was a French billiard-room in the same neighbourhood, where the frequenters played for cups of coffee and twopenny glasses of *absinthe*. It was in this room that I parted company with him. It had been his ticket night that evening, and he

and the prompter had divided a little money. He was in high spirits, and invited some of his companions to drink. The liquor was a little more plentiful and also a little stronger than usual, and the company got very hilarious. At length one of them got hold of me, and addressing the company generally, said, "Let's open Dawdle's umbrella in honour of the occasion; I'm sure it hasn't been opened for twelve months."

"No, no; don't, don't," cried my master, in agony; "don't be a fool, Scatter! I shall never roll it again!"

Scatter took no heed of him, but deliberately undid my waistband, and opened me out.

The act was greeted by a roar of laughter, in which every one joined but my master. The discovery which caused so much amusement to the others made him look seriously annoyed: my silk covering was full of holes.

My master was very angry at first; but presently he recovered his temper, and said,—

"Come, I'll put my umbrella up to auction. What do you say?"

"Three-halfpence," said one.

"Farthing more," said another.

After a good deal of chaff of this kind, I was knocked down to Skelton at eighteen-pence.

I had often seen Skelton at this resort, and I had often heard him talked about by the others. He was a very good-looking young fellow, and always seemed well-dressed; but he had no occupation that any one knew of, and it was jocularly said that where and how he lived was one of the mysteries of London. This mystery I was destined to penetrate, but not that night. Dawdle stipulated that he should keep me until he could procure a substitute on the following day. Accordingly, next morning I was handed over to Skelton, who rolled me up very carefully, and walked off with me in triumph; I say in triumph, for Skelton was really very proud of me. I was still a slim, genteel-looking umbrella, and when I was rolled up no one could see the havoc which the canker worm of time (and wear) was making in my interior. I had not been long in Skelton's possession before I learned that in this respect we were well matched—like master, like umbrella. On a closer acquaintance, I discovered that Skelton's clothes were not so good nor so new as they looked at a distance. His gloves fitted well, but they had evidently been cleaned; his hat shone with uncommon lustre, but it was obviously the forced lustre of decay; his coat was neat and well-brushed, and was adorned with a natty velvet

collar, but it was getting thin and threadbare. I made these observations while Skelton was promenading up and down the sunny side of Regent-street. He lounged up and down the street for nearly two hours, without any apparent object except to stare in at the windows and quiz ladies through his eye-glass. Now and then he met a male friend (very like himself in dress and appearance) with whom he stopped for a minute to shake hands.

Somewhere about three o'clock in the afternoon this promenade came to an end. He seemed to consider that he had performed part of his daily duty; for he no sooner stepped from the pavement in the Quadrant, and turned aside into a by-street leading towards Leicester-square, than he dropped his stately and assumed manner of walking, and became (in bearing at least) quite another man. Presently he entered a dingy-looking eating-house, having a Polish name in yellow, awkward-looking letters over the door. He sat down at one of the little tables, spread with a very dirty cloth, took up the German carte, and called the waiter.

“What is there to-day, Carl?”

Carl, in very good English, mentioned various things.



" Ah ! um, I shall take—ah—Bigos ! "

A plate of some very nice-looking brown stew, with fried potatoes side by side with it, was placed before him. There was not much of it ; but my master occupied a considerable time in consuming it ; picked it over with his fork as if it had been something very choice. When he had glanced at all the newspapers, and picked his teeth elaborately, as though he had had an exquisite dinner, he called the waiter.

" Bigos and one bread, no beer ? " said Carl.

" No. "

" Fivepence, sir, if you please. "

My master had dined. He next paid a visit to a tobacconist in the neighbourhood, and purchased half-an-ounce of returns. Before he left the shop he took from his waistcoat pocket a little roll of tissue paper, and made some cigarettes. He lighted one, walked towards Regent-street, and the moment he emerged into that fashionable thoroughfare, assumed his old stately and measured walk. From Regent-street he passed into Piccadilly, and walked on to Hyde Park Corner, when he turned into the Park. It was the fashionable hour, and the Row was filled with cantering horsemen and horsewomen, while down

the drive ran a stream of gay carriages. My master walked up and down on the outskirts of the railings, and puffed his cigarette, exhibited me most ostentatiously, and occasionally bowed to horsewomen, and nodded familiarly to horsemen, who did not, it appeared to me, return the compliment. My master remained promenading up and down in this manner until near dusk, when he turned out into Piccadilly, and retraced his steps towards Regent-street and Leicester-square. About six o'clock he revisited the German eating-house, drank a cup of coffee, and engaged with an acquaintance he met there in a game of dominoes, at which he won the price of his coffee and a cigar. At a later hour he betook himself to the French billiard-room already mentioned, and remained there playing and winning a trifle, until one o'clock, when he bade his companions good night. I was now destined to see what no other companion of master had ever seen—his home. It was a single attic room in a dirty-looking house (with a great many bell-handles on the door-post) near Windmill-street. The room had a sloping roof, and whitewashed walls; it contained a truckle-bed, a single Windsor chair, a small toilet-table, covered with a coarse towel, and a deal-box set on end to serve as a washing-

stand. I had little time to observe more, for my master undressed hurriedly, put out his candle, and went to bed. The morning's light revealed mysteries such as I had never dreamt of. The first thing my master did on getting out of bed was to inspect his patent leather boots. With a coarse, damp cloth he wiped off the dirt ; then carefully dried the leather, then rubbed it with a little oil, and finally polished both boots with a ragged silk handkerchief. But when this was done, he discovered a crack, through which, on putting on the boots, his white (not very white) stockings showed. He marked the white spot with pen and ink, and then, taking off his boot, darkened the place with blacking, and polished it with a shoe-brush. He next directed his attention to his light-coloured trowsers, and finding some dark spots, rubbed them over with chalk, and dusted it off again, by flicking the parts with his finger. Inspecting his coat, he found a slight rent under one of the arms, which he immediately proceeded to fine-draw with needle and thread. His jewelry next came under survey. Having laid his watch and guard, his pin, his cuff-links, and three rings on the table, he opened a drawer, and took out a piece of wash-leather, an old tooth brush, and the lid of a gallipot containing whiting. First

with the tooth-brush, then with the wash-leather and whiting, and finally with the ragged silk handkerchief which he had used for his boots, he rubbed up and polished every article, one by one. Having completed his toilet operations by elaborately rubbing his hat round and round with an old silk handkerchief, he took me up from the corner, and left his "home" for the day. I soon found that one day was just like another; the walk in Regent-street in the forenoon, the dinner of Bigos at the German eating-house, the lounge on the outskirts of Rotten-row, the coffee and dominoes at the eating-house, the billiards and petty betting, and then home to the garret.

For a whole year I was destined to live this life with my master, making a great figure in the day, but invariably relapsing into meanness and obscurity at night. He had no friend or relative on the face of the earth that I could ever discover, but one, and that was some unknown person in the country who every quarter sent him a post-office order for five pounds. It was all that he had to live upon; though the people who saw him lounging in Regent-street or the park would never have thought so.

I noticed, at an early period, that Skelton was troubled with a cough. It grew worse and worse,

and Skelton grew paler, and thinner, and weaker, until at length he was unable to leave his bed. He had no friends to come and see him and comfort him, and when he was obliged to seek medical advice, it was of the parish doctor. The third-floor lodger, Mr Fitzhardinge Maunder, a gentleman who had seen better days, heard of poor Skelton's condition, and interested himself to procure the doctor's attendance.

One morning when the doctor came, all that remained of poor Skelton was his lifeless clay; and on the only chair by his bedside lay his one threadbare suit, in which he had taken so much pride; and under his pillow, when he was moved, they found his little pinchbeck trinkets, his watch—which, in reality, was a brass locket—his gilt chain, his pin, and his rings, all grown dull and tarnished. And with them there was a scrap of paper, on which was written in pencil these words—"I give my umbrella (which is some use) to the gentleman down-stairs, who has been kind to me: as to my trinkets, they are of no value whatever; put them in my coffin with the other rubbish."

## THE SILVER SNUFF-BOX.

ABOUT fifteen years have gone by since the events of this story passed under the observation of the present writer ; yet the sad history of pretty Lucy, the maid of the Woolpack, is still well remembered in that little west country seaport, where she was known to high and low, to old and young, as at once the fairest and most unfortunate of her sex.

Lucy Fairlam held the humble situation of barmaid at the Woolpack Tavern, one of the oldest and most respectable houses of entertainment in the town. She was an orphan, and the landlord, old Joe Wardle—as we used familiarly to call him—took her into his service when she was a mere child. It was entirely an act of charity, for Lucy was too young then to earn her living.

Her first appearance in the town was made in the character of a beggar. She came with her mother, who wandered through the streets on a

snowy winter's day singing ballads to excite charity. The poor, worn, ill-clad woman led her little child by the hand, and the aspect of misery which they presented excited compassion in every breast. The mother was near the end of her journey on earth. Charity was extended to her with no sparing hand by the compassionate townspeople, but it came too late. It may have been that in her long and weary pilgrimage she had met none but cold-hearted Levites, and had only now encountered the Samaritan when the oil and wine were all in vain. She died that night in the workhouse, and little Lucy was an orphan.

Old Wardle had seen the poor woman and her child pass his house, and the mother's melancholy song and the child's strange beauty made a strong impression upon him. When he heard of the mother's death, he went to the workhouse and offered to take the child. I met him that day leading the poor orphan by the hand to a home. Lucy was a very little creature then. As she trotted by Wardle's side, her little head scarcely reached above his knee.

Although I have more reason to think of her as a grown woman, I can well remember her as she was then. She was bare-footed—a little slender thing, with pale cheeks, large blue eyes,

and flaxen hair. Thin and ragged as were her poor clothes, it was evident that the mother had taken some pains to make the child look neat and clean. Her skin was fair and delicate, and her flaxen hair bore evidence of having been frequently and carefully dressed. As the people saw old Wardle leading the little orphan through the snow, and stopping every now and then to cheer her with a word of kindness, they muttered to themselves, "God bless him, he is a good, kind soul." And so he was: he took Lucy in, and clothed and fed her, and protected her, until she grew up to be a woman, and was able to requite her benefactor by helping him in his business.

After an absence of ten years I returned to find many changes in the little town. Old people, whose faces and figures had been as familiar objects in the high-street as the quaintly gabled houses that had stood there for generations, had passed away to the grave; lads and lasses, whom I had left flirting and love-making, had become staid heads of families; the little children who played on the flag-stones before the court-house, had grown to be men and women.

And going hither and thither to see old scenes and old faces, I called in at the Woolpack,



and there at the bar I saw a tall, handsome girl, with golden hair and blue eyes, who, I was told, was no other than the poor little ragged, motherless child whom Wardle had adopted nearly eleven years before. I was greatly struck by her graceful figure and delicate beauty. She had none of the air of a barmaid. Her mien and movements were those of a lady, and her whole appearance was singularly out of character with the nature of her occupation. I was not surprised to hear that one so surpassingly beautiful was the admired of all admirers in that little town.

"She is quite a beauty," I said to old Wardle.

"So they all say," he replied; "and I really think her good looks have turned half the young fellows' heads, ay, and some of the old fellows' heads, too," he added, with a chuckle.

I soon had an opportunity of seeing for myself that Wardle's words were pretty near the literal truth. Lucy's beauty and winning manners had done, or were still doing, serious execution upon both the heads and the hearts of old and young of the opposite sex. She was a sort of goddess, and Wardle's pewter counter was her shrine; and there at all hours her numerous votaries worshipped at her feet, many of them overdoing the sacrifice to Bacchus that they might

have an excuse for remaining in the presence of the divinity of their adoration. That was how Lucy's beauty did execution upon the heads as well as the hearts of her admirers.

The old men who frequented the parlour—Dr Mayflower, Armstrong, the chemist, and Braintree, the bookseller—though all old enough to be her father, were as much enamoured of Lucy's good looks as any of the young ones. But indeed the whole town—that is to say, the male portion of it—was in love with Lucy; the old fellows platonically or paternally, the young fellows, as young fellows always will be, with good looks and winning ways. The unusual admiration in which Lucy was held both by old and young excited no little jealousy among her own sex. But the breath of scandal never assailed the pretty barmaid of the Woolpack; she was never forward, never presuming; and she could no more help being admired and run after, than the honeysuckle upon which the bees cluster can help its sweetness.

Courted as she was by many young fellows who would have been proud of her for a wife, Lucy rejected all offers, and to the great delight of her platonic and paternal admirers remained single, to be, as Armstrong was wont to say, "a thing of beauty and a joy for ever." The old

doctor used to dare the young men to make any proposals to Lucy. "I have my own notions on the subject," he would say, after a glass or two; "and if any one of those young scamps dares to marry that lovely young creature, and make a drudge of her, I'll—I'll break his neck."

In consequence of Lucy's great beauty and obliging ways, the custom of the Woolpack increased so greatly, that old Wardle, who had long been a widower, found it necessary to engage a housekeeper; and he took, at the same time, a nephew of his own to assist in the bar. The housekeeper was not at all liked by the customers of the Woolpack. She was a very good servant, and attentive enough when called upon to perform any service; but she was apt to usurp duties which the customers would rather have had performed by pretty Lucy.

The way in which her interference was often resented was not calculated to improve her temper. And perhaps a woman of much more amiability of disposition could scarcely have calmly endured the slights which were put upon Mrs Burdon, in consequence of the superior attraction of one of her own sex. At the bar, customers pointedly avoided giving orders to Mrs Burdon when she presented herself, and rather preferred

to wait until Lucy was disengaged. When Dr Mayflower rang for his rum-and-water, and Mrs Burdon answered the summons, the guests in the parlour took no pains to conceal their displeasure, and the doctor or Armstrong would blurt out, "Why don't Lucy answer the bell? send Lucy next time."

With this occurring almost every hour of the day, it was scarcely in nature for Mrs Burdon to love Lucy as the others did. Still she did not show any enmity to the girl, and bore the slights she met with so calmly, and with so much good temper, that the landlord conceived a very high opinion of her, and would listen to no one who sought to damage her in his estimation. Wardle was a just man, and knowing the selfish object of the dead-set that was made by certain of the customers against the housekeeper, he resolutely took her part, and defended her on all occasions.

In the mean time it began to be noticed, and particularly by the ardent young fellows who frequented the bar, and whose sober habits were rapidly being undermined by the seductive beauty of the pretty barmaid, that Lucy was sensibly losing the sprightliness of manner which had rendered her such a universal favourite. She was not so gay and talkative as formerly, and it was

evident that she did not take pains to distribute her smiles and attentions with that impartiality which had won her such general admiration.

It was thought at first that the housekeeper vexed her, and interfered with her ; but after close observation no one could say that there was any ground for that opinion. By-and-by the disagreeable truth came out. Lucy was in love, not with any of the smart young fellows who had offered her marriage and a station in life far superior to that which she held as barmaid of the Woolpack, but with the landlord's nephew, young Harry Wardle.

Lucy's admirers were no less disgusted than amazed at this discovery, for young Wardle, though tolerably good-looking, was loutish and uncouth in his manners, and very far from the sort of person who could be considered a fitting match for the pretty, lady-like Lucy. The doctor was furious when he heard of it, and I think would have carried out his long-registered threat, had he not been restrained. The indignation of the young men found vent in a variety of expressions. "To take up with that lout when I offered for her !" "Now, here have I been night after night, drinking glass after glass of strong ale, until I could not see out of my eyes, all for the love of

her, and then to bestow her affection upon that fellow !”

The discovery of Lucy's attachment created such an excitement among the customers of the Woolpack, that old Joe Wardle's business was quite upset. Joe was for some time puzzled how to act ; but at last he formed his resolution, and dismissed his nephew from his service, finding him a situation elsewhere. He saw that it would be neither for Lucy's good nor for the young man's if they were to marry, and in removing his nephew he conceived he was doing the best for both.

We all fondly expected that, when a little time had passed, Lucy would forget Harry Wardle, and recover her old spirits. But we were doomed to disappointment. Lucy grew daily more and more melancholy, and by-and-by her beauty began to fade. Her eye lost its lustre, her smile became sad and forced, and the roses on her cheek paled day by day. She tried to be as active and obliging as formerly, but the old vivacity and cheerfulness were gone. It was clear that she was love-sick for Harry, and could not forget him.

This state of things was soon made worse by the return of Harry to the town. He had thrown up his situation, and had come back to be near

Lucy. At first, when he came to the bar, he told his uncle that he had been discharged because his master no longer required his services, and that he was looking out for another situation. On this representation his uncle tolerated his visits for a time ; but seeing, at length, that the lad was making no effort to obtain a place, but was merely hanging about to have opportunities of seeing Lucy, he remonstrated with him on his conduct, and forbade him the house.

After this, Harry fell into evil ways, and very narrowly escaped a conviction for poaching. He was in the habit of drinking a good deal, and when he was excited with liquor would walk into the parlour of the Woolpack and take his seat among the company, daring his uncle to touch him or lay a hand upon him. This, of course, only made matters worse, and old Wardle had serious thoughts of extricating himself from all further trouble, by discharging Lucy ; but his rigid sense of justice and his feeling nature restrained him from committing an act, which, while it might have saved himself from further annoyance, would inevitably, as he thought, have devoted both Lucy and his nephew to a life of misery.

Some people said that old Wardle was too

harsh with his nephew, and that he might have made a bright man of him by treating him kindly. There were a few—and Mrs Burdon, the house-keeper, was one of them—who did not see any reason why the attachment between Harry and Lucy should not have been encouraged. Harry was certainly as good as Lucy, and they might do do very well in a little shop or something of that sort.

Things remained in this state, Lucy becoming more and more sad and dispirited every day, and Harry rushing into the Woolpack every now and then to upbraid and defy his uncle, when one winter's afternoon, as Dr Mayflower, Armstrong, Braintree, and myself were sitting in the parlour, old Wardle entered the room, and with a mysterious and significant look locked the door behind him.

"Dr Mayflower," said Wardle, seating himself solemnly at the bottom of the table, "I have something very unpleasant to tell you, and I wish to ask your advice upon it. You are all my friends here, I know; and I may speak to you without reserve." Wardle hesitated for a moment, and the doctor exclaimed,—

"Why, what on earth is the matter, man? you look as serious as a mute at a funeral."



"It is a serious matter, doctor," Wardle replied. "I have made the unpleasant discovery that there is a thief in the house."

"A thief!" we all exclaimed in surprise.

"A thief," Wardle reiterated; I have been missing money from the bar for some time; and now I feel assured that some one must be systematically robbing me."

Armstrong at this moment mentioned the name of Mrs Burdon; but before he could say more, Wardle went on—

"Mrs Burdon, too, has missed money; it was she who first made the discovery."

"Then you don't suspect her?" said the doctor.

"Certainly not," Wardle replied; "I have no reason to suspect her."

"Have you reason," I asked, "to suspect any one else?"

"I cannot say that I have," was Wardle's answer, evidently given with some reserve.

"Who are the persons who have access to the money in the bar besides yourself?" the doctor inquired.

"Beside myself and Mrs Burdon," said Wardle, "only Lucy."

"Surely you cannot suspect her?" This was

exclaimed in loud and indignant tones by all of us in a breath.

"I accuse no one," said Wardle, calmly; "I should be sorry to do that without proof. I am merely stating the circumstances of the case. Lucy would be the last person whom I could think capable of such an act."

"I am glad to hear you say so," said the doctor. "It cannot be Lucy; I am sure of that."

We all echoed his words almost in the same breath, and Armstrong added,—

"It is more likely to be Mrs Burdon; I never liked the looks of that woman."

"We cannot help looks, Mr Armstrong," said Wardle. "Mrs Burdon has always been a faithful servant to me, and I have never had any cause to doubt her honesty."

"Nor any cause to doubt Lucy's," said Armstrong.

"Nor any cause to doubt Lucy's," Wardle answered; "but still the fact remains that there is some one robbing me."

It was suggested to Wardle that the thief might be some person who frequented the bar and took opportunities when Lucy's back was turned to put his hand in the till. The idea of Lucy's guilt, at any rate, was scouted with indignation by

all of us, and Wardle said he was glad we were, in that respect, of the same opinion as himself. It *might* be some person or persons who frequented the bar, and he promised to set a watch upon them.

A few evenings after this, while the same company, including the landlord, were assembled in the parlour of the Woolpack, Lucy entered in answer to the bell with traces of tears on her face. Harry had been there that day, Wardle said, and he always disturbed her. Armstrong spoke to her kindly, and in a half-joking manner asked her what was the matter.

"Let me speak to you, Lucy," he said, "like a father."

Lucy took the hand which he offered her, but the next instant burst into tears, and breaking away from Armstrong, went round to Wardle, and fell weeping upon his neck.

"Ah, sir," she said, through her tears, "you are my only father, and a kind, good father you have been to me."

"Why, Lucy," said Wardle, "what is the matter with you to-night?"

"I wish to remind you, sir," she said, still continuing to sob and weep, "that it is eleven years this very day since you took me out of the

street. I was a poor orphan girl then, ragged, and motherless, and hungry. You took compassion on me, gave me a home and shelter, clothed and fed me. It is eleven years, sir, to-day, and the cold snow was falling as it is falling now."

"Is it so long as that, Lucy?" Wardle replied, scarcely knowing what to say.

"It is, sir; and were it a hundred years I could never forget your goodness to me. You have been a father to me—more than a father; and I cannot express to you all the gratitude I feel at my heart."

"Don't say a word about it, Lucy," Wardle replied, kindly. "You do your work and earn your wages, and you are just as useful to me as I am to you. There, there, go and fetch the punch."

Lucy went away sadly and reluctantly, and it was evident that she wished to say something which she had not the heart to utter. Before she returned Harry Wardle came in with a portman-teau in his hand, and sullenly set himself down at the table opposite us. Harry scowled at his uncle; but the latter took no notice of him.

Lucy entered presently with the glasses, and when she saw Harry, went across the room to speak to him. We noticed them whispering for

some time, until at length Lucy gave a sudden start, and seemed to be affected with pain. The next instant the town clock struck, and Harry started to his feet.

"You hear that," he said, addressing his uncle. "This hour will rid you of my disagreeable presence. I sail to-night in the *Falcon* steamer for Liverpool, and thence for America. Then, ho ! for California and fortune !"

At that moment Lucy fell into the young man's arms, and we could hear her cry in tones of the keenest anguish, "Oh, Harry, Harry !"

"Never fear, Lucy," he said ; and I thought he looked noble as he uttered the words ; "I shall return before long a rich man, and then who shall dare stand between you and me ?"

We were all so much taken aback by this sudden and unexpected announcement, that none of us had been able to utter a word, and before any of us could speak, Harry stood forward, and holding out his hand said, "There is my hand, if any of you will take it."

We shook hands with him one by one, and bade him God speed. He then turned to Lucy, clasped her in his arms, and kissed her.

"Farewell, Lucy," he said, "we shall meet again and be happy."

With these words he tore himself from her embrace, and rushed away. Lucy dropped on the ground where he left her; and we, who had been witnesses of the strange scene, sank into our chairs, and looked at each other in blank amazement.

Mrs Burdon entered almost immediately to inquire if the snuff-box was there.

"No," said Wardle, looking round, "it is not here."

"It is not in the bar," said Mrs Burdon.

"Do you mean my silver snuff-box?" asked Wardle.

Mrs Burdon said, "Yes."

"Lucy has charge of it," Wardle replied; no doubt she knows."

"No doubt," said Mrs Burdon.

"Lucy," said Wardle, calling to her where she lay sunk in grief upon the floor. "Lucy!" She took no notice of the call. "Lucy!" He went up and touched her on the shoulder. "Lucy."

"Yes, sir."

"Where is the silver snuff-box?"

"In the bar, sir?"

"Bring it to me."

Lucy left the room, and returned almost immediately—"It is not there, sir."

"Who had it last—do you know?"

"I do not, sir."

"Do you?" inquired Wardle, addressing Mrs Burdon.

Mrs Burdon glanced first at Lucy, and then directing her gaze full upon Wardle, said—"I believe I last saw it in the hands of Harry Wardle."

Lucy started as if electrified, and glaring upon the woman in a wild and excited manner, exclaimed—"Heavens! what do you mean—what would you insinuate?"

"That Harry Wardle has probably stolen it," was the calm reply.

"You lie, you lie—it is a wicked, wicked lie!" Lucy exclaimed.

"This must be cleared up," said Wardle. "The vessel has not yet left the harbour."

"'Tis false!—'tis false! I say," Lucy protested, with terrible vehemence.

"We shall see," said Wardle. "My hat and stick, Burdon." As Burdon left the room, the steamer bell began to ring. Lucy jumped upon a settle to look out of the window that overlooked the harbour.

"Quick, woman, quick," Wardle shouted, as the housekeeper appeared at the door with his

hat and stick. He seized them from her hand, and was about to rush from the room when Lucy ran forward and threw herself on the floor before him.

"Sir, sir ; stay, stay," she exclaimed, clasping her hands and raising them in the attitude of supplication. "Harry did not steal the box—he did not, indeed."

"I cannot take your word for it," said Wardle, trying to pass her.

Lucy clung to his knees. "Stay, oh, stay, sir, and—and—I will confess all."

"Quick, then, speak."

Lucy struggled painfully with her emotion for a moment, and gasped out—*I stole the box!*"

We were thunderstruck.

"*You?*" said Wardle, incredulously.

"Yes, I," Lucy returned, in a firm voice, and then in faltering tones added, "Heaven forgive me."

"You can restore it, then?" said Wardle.

"Restore it!" Lucy repeated, vacantly ; "no, no—I cannot."

"Cannot?"

Lucy sobbed violently, and said in broken accents, "I—I sold it to a gipsy woman."



"It is true, then," said Wardle, sadly.

"Shall I fetch a constable?" asked the house-keeper.

Wardle paused for a moment, while his breast heaved with emotion, and at length said, in a strong and decided voice, "No; bring that girl's bonnet and shawl, and whatever else belongs to her." Then he turned towards Dr Mayflower and the rest of us, and said, pointing to Lucy, prostrate at his feet, "You see that girl there. She herself has told you that I took her in when she was starving in the streets."

"Oh, sir, oh, sir!" Lucy cried, in agony and shame, as she clung to her master's knees.

"That I gave her a home and shelter," Wardle continued.

"Sir, sir."

"That I clothed and fed her."

"Mercy, mercy!"

"That I have been a father—more than a father to her."

"Oh, have pity, have pity!"

"And you see," said Wardle, "how she has requited me."

At that moment Burdon entered with Lucy's bonnet and shawl. The girl rose calmly, took the bonnet and shawl, and as Wardle pointed to

the door, slowly emerged from it, and went forth into the street, where the snow was falling as it fell eleven years before, when she wandered through it, as she did now, friendless and without a home.

The news of Lucy's self-accusation and dismissal from her service was known all over the town that night, and created a most painful sensation among old and young. The bar of the Woolpack was crowded all night through with Lucy's admirers, all anxious to hear the exact particulars of the affair. Lucy had accused herself, but no one could believe her guilty. "Impossible; she could not do it," was repeated from mouth to mouth; and while some of the young men stood and gazed, with streaming eyes, at the place where Lucy was no longer, others vented their indignation against the landlord and Mrs Burdon.

There was, however, no getting over Lucy's own confession. Dr Mayflower, Armstrong, Braintree, and others had heard it, and it was impossible to doubt their testimony. Still no one could believe in Lucy's guilt, and in seeking for some other explanation of the affair, it occurred to every one to lay the blame upon Harry Wardle.

He had stolen the box, and Lucy had accused herself to save him.

While this discussion was fiercely raging in and about the Woolpack, Lucy was lying in a swoon on the cold stones before the town-house. She was found there late at night, and was taken to the house of Dr Mayflower. Next day she was in a raging fever. She lay in it long, and was nearly at death's door. But through the unremitting care and fatherly attention of the old doctor, she escaped death, but only to awake to a greater calamity. Lucy had lost her reason ! There were tears on many a manly cheek, and sobs convulsed many a manly breast that day, when the sad news was told !

A subscription was raised among the townspeople, and Lucy was placed under the care of a kind-hearted widow, who lived in a cottage a little way from the town. It was not necessary to place her under restraint, and the poor girl wandered about at will, always plying her knitting-needles, and singing a sad, melancholy song. She came into the market on Fridays and brought the little articles she had knitted with her for sale. They were always bought for more than their value, and thus poor Lucy was indulged in the idea, which she cherished so fondly, that she

earned her own living, and was a burden to no one.

She was often questioned about the snuff-box ; but she always persisted that she was the thief, and was passionately indignant when any one hinted at young Harry being the guilty person. But her talk on this subject was always wild and incoherent. When she was in a melancholy mood, she would weep, and say, "No, no, no ; I didn't do it ; oh, no, no ;" presently she would start and exclaim, "It was not Harry ; I say no, it was I—I am the thief ;" and then she would sink down, and bury her head in her hands, and sway herself to and fro in deep anguish.

Her misfortune was a bitter grief to the whole community, and the shadow of it hung over the town for many months. Lucy Fairlam was as much as ever an object of interest to old and young ; but it was not now her beauty that excited admiration, but her misfortunes that aroused pity. And while tender hearts bled for her, angry lips invoked curses on the head of Harry Wardle, who was supposed to be the cause of all her trouble and her terrible calamity.

No one was more distressed by what had happened than old Wardle ; and he reproached himself bitterly for the share he had in bringing it

about. But it was of no avail now to acquit Lucy of the crime, since it was her only happiness to be accounted guilty.

The popularity of the Woolpack as a house of entertainment gradually declined from the day Lucy left it, until at length there was scarcely one of the old customers left. There were no smart young fellows at the bar now, and the staid and respectable company of the parlour went elsewhere. Old Wardle looked sad and spirit-broken, and it was said that Mrs Burdon, the housekeeper, was master of him and the Woolpack both.

And time rolled on, and four years passed. And one autumn day, when the yellow leaves were falling, I found myself in company with Armstrong, sitting on a bench in the little garden of the Woolpack, talking over the melancholy story of poor Lucy. We did not often go there, and what led us there then we scarcely knew, unless it was that the falling leaves seemed to harmonize with our sad thoughts, and the scene with the unhappy subject of them. While we were sitting there the waiter came out with a letter. "Here is a letter," he said, "addressed to Lucy Fairlam, the girl who lived at this house, barmaid, four years ago; she wanders about here

sometimes, but as I don't know when she may come again, perhaps either of you gentlemen would deliver it to her."

I took the letter, and saw that it bore the postmark of San Francisco. It could only be from one person — Harry Wardle. Armstrong was of the same opinion. Our first feeling was one of indignation. How could he dare to write to the girl whom he had so shamefully sacrificed? But then our suspicion might, after all, be ill-founded. The letter might explain what was now a mystery. We rose hastily, with the intention of carrying the letter to Lucy, when the sound of her voice broke upon our ears. She came in at the little wicket, singing her melancholy song, and after gazing vacantly round, sat down upon a mound of fallen leaves that had been raked together under a tree. Her appearance at that moment was singularly wild and strangely beautiful. She wore a white wrapper, and her long flaxen hair hung loose over her shoulders. As she sat there, she took up handfuls of the withered leaves and scattered them about her, waywardly and recklessly, like a child playing.

I went up to her, touched her gently on the shoulder, and said, "Lucy, here is news for you."

She started, and said, "News for *me* ! Ah ! it is not good news, then."

"See," I said, "it is a letter from America—from San Francisco."

She rose hastily, and her eyes sparkled wildly.

"From San Francisco ? Then it is from Harry !" And she seized the letter eagerly, and tore it open. She began to read it aloud, but suddenly paused, and drew her hand across her eyes. "My brain reels," she said ; "I cannot see."

"Let me read it for you," I said.

The offer seemed to startle her ; for she drew back suddenly, clutched the letter tightly, and said, "No, no, no ! I will read it myself. Stand away !"

She went to a little distance and read the letter, and presently ran towards us with an exclamation of joy.

"Look, look !" she said ; it *is* from Harry ! He is coming home to marry me. There, there !" and she handed me the letter. "Did I not tell you," she said, "that he was innocent ? Would he come back here if he were not ? Look at his letter. This is October, and he was to start in June. Read what he says ;" and she looked

over my shoulder, and read aloud in breathless excitement, pointing with her finger as she read,

"I have been fortunate here, and have made enough to set us up in some business at home in my own native land, and with you, dearest, as my wife—"

"You hear that," she said; "with me as his wife;" and she laughed wildly and hysterically, and then suddenly started, and clasped her head with her hands—

"His wife! ah, I forgot—I am a criminal—a wicked girl, a thief, an outcast"—and she sank upon the ground, crumpling the letter in her frenzied hands.

Both Armstrong and myself were startled by the earnestness of her manner in saying this. She was either guilty, or had deluded herself into the belief that she was so. She was sitting now, scattering the dead leaves about and singing sadly and listlessly. Armstrong and I walked away from her for a moment to think how we should console her, when a man of foreign appearance entered the garden by the wicket, and came hastily towards us. He stopped abruptly, and held out his hands. For a moment we did not know him, but almost instantly his name rose to our lips—



"Harry Wardle!"

"The same," he said; "back again to the old town; and I have already heard all. Oh, tell me," he cried, in an anguish of grief, "is it—can it be true?"

We could not answer.

"What, you believe it then?" he cried, in a burst of passion. "But I will not believe it. The charge is false—yes, by Heaven, it is false. But let me not stay here; take me to Lucy—do not delay a moment."

"Hush," I said, taking him by the arm, and pointing to Lucy. She was still scattering the leaves and singing, her hair streaming wildly over her shoulders.

"Great Heaven!" the young man exclaimed; "what do I see?—a maniac!—support me, Heaven;" and then he ran to Lucy, and called her name,

"Lucy, Lucy." She took no heed, and he called again, "Lucy!"

At length she looked up. "That voice—I know it—Harry, Harry!" and she fell with a low wail into his arms.

"Lucy, dearest," Harry said, "I am come back to you as I promised."

"Yes, yes, bless you, Harry, I knew you

would," Lucy replied, through her sobs; "and we shall be married, shall we not?"

"We shall, dear; we shall."

"But, Harry," said Lucy, suddenly, "hush; have you heard I—I am a thief?"

"No, no, that cannot be—I will not believe it."

"But you must, Harry; they said you stole the box; but it was I—I confessed it."

"Gracious Heaven," cried Harry, in an agony of soul, "can this be?"

Lucy continued—"You must not marry me, Harry—I will not bring disgrace upon you—forget me, forget me," and she broke from his embrace, and fled from the garden.

Poor Harry fell upon the ground and wept and sobbed like a child. We induced him to rise and go away with us, and he did so quietly, and seemed to be calmed by his tears. But presently he burst forth in passionate invectives against his uncle, and swore that he would return to the Woolpack and have the matter cleared up. We tried to persuade him not to go that night, but he broke away from us impatiently, and with hurried and impetuous steps returned towards the inn.

We heard before the night was out what came

of his going thither. As he entered the little garden, it being then dark, he noticed persons passing and re-passing the windows in haste and excitement. The next instant, the outer door was burst open, and old Wardle ran into the garden. Before Harry could speak or make himself known, Wardle addressed him in tones of alarm and urgency. "Young man," he said, "go and fetch a doctor instantly—go without a moment's delay, if you have any pity for a fellow-creature; a woman is dying in the house."

Harry was ready to pour forth a torrent of wrath upon the head of his uncle; but the urgency of his appeal diverted his purpose, and without a word he ran off for Dr Mayflower. When he returned to the Woolpack with the doctor, he learned that the sick person was Mrs Burdon, the housekeeper. She had been seized with fits, and was so violent that it required two persons to hold her down in her bed. The doctor had scarcely gone up-stairs before he called to Harry for assistance. Harry entered the room, and found the doctor and his uncle struggling desperately to prevent the unhappy woman from doing violence to herself.

At that moment his uncle recognized him, and

mentioned his name. Mrs Burdon turned her head suddenly and saw him, and uttering a terrible scream, extricated herself from the doctor and Wardle, and leapt from the bed. In an instant of time she ran to a box that stood in the corner of the room, unlocked it, took something from it, and jumped into bed again. She had scarcely done so when Harry rushed upon her, and attempted to seize her hands. She struggled with him desperately, and screamed so dreadfully that the doctor and Wardle thought for a moment that Harry was choking her.

"Let me alone," he said; "you see what she has in her hands;" and then the doctor and Wardle saw that Mrs Burdon was desperately clutching some shining object which Harry was trying to take from her. After a brief but terrible struggle, a struggle between the two as for life or death, Harry accomplished his object, and held forth to the astonished gaze of the doctor, his uncle, and others who now crowded the room, the long-missing SILVER SNUFF-BOX.

"I saw it glitter in her hand," he said, "as she took it from its hiding-place, and I divined the whole truth in an instant."

And now we all know in what manner Mrs Burdon had taken her revenge for those slights

which Lucy's beauty had caused her in the old days.

There was great joy in the town that night when it was known that Lucy's innocence had been established. Harry lost no time in going in search of her to the widow's cottage; and he was followed by a whole host of her admirers. I was witness of the sad scene which ensued.

"Lucy," he cried, as he burst into the cottage—"Lucy, you are innocent; see, here is the proof—the box!"

Poor thing! she knew not the meaning of his words. Seeing the box in his hands, she was seized, vaguely, with the suspicion which she would never allow others to breathe.

"Hush, hush," she said, covering the box with her hands; "they don't suspect you—let *me* bear the blame—hide it—hide it."

Harry explained the matter to her more at length, but it was long before she could be made to understand the state of the case. At length, when others confirmed what Harry said, she danced for joy, and clapped her hands like a child.

"And we shall be married now, Harry?" she said.

"Yes, yes, dear," he answered, clasping her to his breast. And the day was fixed.

Poor, poor Lucy! The excitement of that night's happiness was too much for her strength. She woke next morning in a raging fever, accompanied by delirium. Dr Mayflower went to attend upon her, and to the many anxious inquirers who went out to hear news of his patient, he said, "She will get better; and I am in hopes that, when the fever leaves her, she will regain her reason." And on the morning when she was to have been Harry's bride, the fever did leave her, and she regained her reason—in Heaven.

### THE COST OF AMUSING THE PUBLIC.

IF an account could be furnished of all the money that is annually spent in this country on amusements, we suspect that the sum total would be found to be far larger than any one has the slightest conception of. Making a rough estimate by the aid of the statistics which have been furnished to us, and including in the list of amusements not alone Theatres, Concert-rooms, Exhibitions, and Entertainments, but also the performances of street minstrels, acrobats, Punch and Judy, and the like, we believe we shall be justified in setting down the gross amount at a figure somewhere between two and three millions sterling.

The statistics of the latter class of exhibitions, however, are not within our reach; and in this paper we shall deal only with those amusements which have a local habitation, and are conducted upon business principles as a branch of commerce.

Those who denounce theatres, and exhibitions of a kindred nature, have possibly little or no idea of the regular and systematic manner in which the affairs of such places are conducted, nor of the large number of families which they find in employment and bread. Now-a-days the affairs of a theatre are conducted with as much scrupulous, business-like exactness as those of a bank, or a merchant's counting-house.

The mimic life and the pleasantries of the stage, which the public take as so much trivial pastime, become a matter of dry figures in the hands of the Treasurer, and resolve themselves, at the end of the week, into a carefully prepared debtor and creditor account, and the payment of salaries and wages. The treasury of a theatre and the counting-house of a manufactory are practically the same thing on a Saturday afternoon. Men, women, and children go to both to be paid for a week's hard work, and to be enabled to pay those who serve them—the butcher and baker who supply the meals, the tailor who furnishes the clothes, the landlord who provides the shelter, and the schoolmaster who teaches the children.

The employment which the theatre provides has, however, a much wider scope than this. It



is not alone the actors, whose persons we are familiar with on the stage, who are enabled to live and bring up their families ; but there is another class, whom we never see, and whose existence many do not even suspect, who are equally dependent upon the theatre for their means of subsistence, and whose labour is equally essential to the conduct of the establishment.

There are scenic artists, scene painters, carpenters, scene shifters, and gas men, all employed within the walls of the theatre ; and out of it, at their own homes, costumiers, tailors, shoemakers, hosiers, wigmakers, jewellers, upholsterers, armourers, printers, draughtsmen, engravers, and bill-stickers. These artists and artisans devote themselves exclusively to theatrical work.

A stage carpenter could not make a chest of drawers fit for domestic use. If you were to order such a thing of him, you would probably find that the drawers were all dummies, or that the whole concern was designed for a trick in a pantomime.

So the tailor will fit you with an embroidered blue velvet tunic, or a pair of trunks ; but he will scarcely undertake to furnish you with a surtout, or a pair of pegtops, suitable for the streets. Generally speaking, the theatrical hosier's hose

are all particoloured, the theatrical shoemaker's shoes all red-heeled, the theatrical jeweller's jewels all glass and tinfoil, the theatrical armourer's armour all white iron and blue paint.

Their craft is thus confined exclusively to theatrical work, and their art aspires to produce nothing which will stand the test of the light of day. It is, in fact, a branch of manufacture and trade called into existence and operation solely by the requirements of the theatre.

The whole number of theatres in the United Kingdom is 133. We may table them thus:—

Theatres in London	..	..	..	25
" in the English Counties and				
Channel Islands	..	..	..	91
" in Wales	..	..	..	3
" in Scotland	..	..	..	9
" in Ireland	..	..	..	5
Total	..	..	..	133

We should expect to find very few theatres in Scotland, where the religious prejudice runs so strong against such amusements; but it is somewhat unaccountable that there should be still fewer in Ireland, where no such prejudice exists, and where the people are more numerous, more vivacious, and naturally addicted to all kinds of

sports and entertainment. The fact, we suspect, must be ascribed to that want of prosperity which has made Ireland exceptional in many other respects. It cannot be Ireland's will, but her poverty, which has made her consent to have only five theatres in all the land ; for no people appreciate the drama better than the Irish, and nowhere are actors more warmly recognized and applauded than in Dublin and Belfast.

Scotland, with less than a third of Ireland's population, has almost double the number of theatres. But here the thing is overdone : the supply is greater than the demand. Except at Glasgow, and, at certain seasons, in Edinburgh, theatricals do not flourish in Scotland. The Scotch are not unappreciative ; far from it. An Edinburgh audience is said to be the most refined and discriminative in Europe, and actors are more proud of laurels gathered in the modern Athens than even in London itself. But, unfortunately for the dramatic art, the audience in Scotland are far more select than numerous, and the cause of this is too well known to require any explanation at our hands.

With the view of furnishing as close an estimate as can possibly be given, without the aid of official returns, of the amount of money expended,

and of the number of persons employed in the work of amusing the public, we shall separate the places of public entertainment into four classes—Theatres, Music Halls, Entertainments (so called), and Gardens.

First, then, as to the Theatres. In London there are altogether 25, as we have stated; but as two of these have been closed for some length of time, we have, practically, to deal with only 23. The number of persons employed at theatres of the first class, such as Covent-garden, Drury-lane, the Lyceum, the Adelphi, and the Haymarket, varies from 70 to 350. If we take, for example, Drury-lane Theatre during pantomime time, we find that the number of persons employed every night is about 300. Allowing for the large families of some, and the small families of others, we may safely multiply this by three to find the total of persons who derive their bread from this theatre. Thus we have in all 900 persons.

This, however, is not the largest number that might be adduced. When the Opera House in the Haymarket was in the hey-day of its prosperity, more than a thousand persons went to the treasury every Saturday to receive their salaries and wages.

The number of persons employed at all the

London theatres is about 4000. And if we give to each three dependents, we shall have a total of 12,000 persons deriving their incomes from theatrical employment. The number three here is not by any means excessive; for though the majority may be unmarried, and many of them mere children, yet it is a well-known fact that little boys and girls of six and seven years often support a whole family by their slender earnings.

In estimating the amount of money taken at the doors of the London theatres, it would not do to select the best period of the year—pantomime time—when the various houses are crowded to the ceiling. Some houses are closed during a portion of the year, and, as a general rule, the receipts fall off during the summer. Taking, then, a general average, we find that the whole amount that flows into the treasuries of the 25 London theatres during the year is about £350,000. Thus we have for London:—

Persons employed in theatres	..	4000
Money taken at the 25 London		
theatres in 12 months	.. ..	£350,000

In addition to the above, there are about 30 different theatrical tradesmen, employing in all somewhere about 160 hands.

We come now to the provincial theatres, of which there are 108. At the best time of the year (Christmas), the first class provincial theatres employ about 100 persons each, the second class 55, and the third class 30. The average for all the year round we find to be 40. This gives us 4320 persons continually employed in theatrical work in the provinces.

Taking the small theatres with the large, and making allowance for periods when some of them are closed, we believe we shall be very near the mark in fixing the average nightly receipts all the year round at £12. The account of the provincial theatres accordingly stands thus:—

Number of persons employed . .	4320
Money taken at the 108 provincial theatres during 12 months . .	£388,800

We take next the Music Halls, which now represent a very important branch of the trade of amusing the public. These capacious and splendidly appointed halls were wholly unknown a dozen years ago. Their increasing numbers now, and the popularity of the entertainment which they present, are certainly proofs that the taste for theatrical entertainments is rapidly spreading among the people.

It is true, grog, beer, and tobacco form a considerable element of the entertainment; but still the class of music presented and the ability of the singers are of a comparatively high order. The comic singing, so much in favour at these places, is possibly not altogether unexceptionable; but the selections from operas are given with a completeness and an effect which are not to be enjoyed anywhere else out of the opera-house.

The theatres have looked with much jealousy and apprehension on the increase of music halls. But after the experience of the last two years, when the music halls have attained to the highest pitch of prosperity that could possibly be reached, we do not think that either managers or actors can say that they have suffered any damage through them. The theatres have been as full as ever; nay, we might say fuller than ever.

As for actors, many of them have turned comic singers at music halls, and are earning double and treble the amount of money that they could ever have hoped to obtain by acting at the theatres. Does not a nigger melodist sing at three or four halls on the same evening, and drive from one to the other in his own carriage? We believe that the music halls, instead of injuring the

theatres and the opera-houses, are, on the contrary, nurseries to those places. They strike at the root of worse places of amusement; they afford entertainment to a large class who stand much in need of it, and they excite a taste for the more refined theatre and opera.

The number of music halls in London is 18; and the total number throughout the country, in England, Scotland, and Ireland, 119; making in all 137. The music halls are thus in excess of the theatres. As an example of the importance of this interest, and of the grand scale on which such places are conducted, we are enabled to state that the proprietors of one of the largest halls in London employ no less than 150 persons, 70 of whom are "professionals," and the rest servants and attendants. The sum disbursed every Saturday at the treasury is over £300.

The charities belonging to the theatrical profession, and supported mainly by its members, are numerous and important. Much as the profession has been maligned, it is a notorious fact that no class of the public is so provident or so charitably disposed one towards another as actors. It would not be difficult to show, also, that actors are distinguished above the members of all other professions for their frugality and saving habits.



The great majority of them have very little chance of laying by anything, but those who earn good salaries almost invariably save and invest money against a rainy day.

We could mention at least a score of actors in London who are well known among their fellows to be "warm men," and a goodly number who might fairly be described as rich. The array of theatrical charities is truly a noble one. In London alone they number seven, viz., the Drury-lane Fund, the Covent-garden Fund, the Royal General Theatrical Fund, the Dramatic, Equestrian, and Musical Sick Fund Association, the Britannia Theatre Sick Fund, and last, though not least, the Royal Dramatic College. The funds in the possession of these charities are very large. The Drury-lane Fund holds £40,000, the Covent-garden £32,000, the General Theatrical £13,000, the Dramatic and Equestrian £1400, and the Royal Dramatic College some £3000, over and above £4000 expended in building the college.

The earnest spirit which has been displayed by the profession, and particularly by Mr Benjamin Webster, the master, and Mr Anson, the secretary, in originating, building, and endowing this Home for aged and decayed actors in the course of two or three short years, speaks more eloquently for

the warm-hearted sympathy and brotherly feeling which prevail among actors than any words that could be used. The college, when finished, will contain accommodation for 20 persons. Each one will be provided with three rooms—sitting-room, bed-room, and kitchen, with other conveniences. The allowance to each from the funds of the charity will be, besides the suite of rooms, coals, candles, and ten shillings per week.

The total sum of money set apart for the relief of the members of the profession in sickness and old age is thus close upon £90,000.

There is another class of persons who derive an income from the organized business of amusing the public—we mean the dramatic authors. This class, though perhaps but little esteemed by managers and actors, may nevertheless be truly said to be the mainspring of the whole theatrical machine. What could managers and actors do without pieces? And good pieces, as a rule, can only come from skilled hands.

Amateurs may occasionally write good novels or good verses; but an amateur author who had not previously made the stage a close study never yet wrote a good play. There are technicalities and artifices in stage writing which nothing but experience and observation can teach. It re-

quires almost an apprenticeship to be a good playwright. It might be said that any one of ordinary literary ability, with pen, ink, and paper to his hand, could write a play. But so it might be said, that any one with leather and lapstone, wax-ends and an awl to his hand, could make a pair of shoes. So he could, perhaps; but both the play and the shoes would be rather clumsy, and the one would be no more likely to draw an audience than the other to attract a customer.

Dramatic writing is not so much a regular profession in this country as it is in France; but still it is to some extent a profession, and its members are so far banded together as a class, that they have a sort of guild for the protection of their mutual interests. This guild is known as the Dramatic Authors' Society, and almost every recognized author of repute is a member of it. Its object is entirely a business one. The members register all their pieces in the books of the society, and the management, for a certain per centage by way of commission, collects the fees for the performance of their pieces in the provinces. The business of collection is simplified in this way. The provincial theatres are rated at so much per annum according to their size and importance. One pays, say £200 per

annum, another £150, another £100, and so on down to the lowest rate, and for these annual payments the managers are entitled to play any pieces registered on the society's list. The whole receipts of the society are then divided among the authors according to the number of times their pieces have been played, and in shares in proportion to the class of piece.

The system of disposing of pieces to managers in London is not so advantageous to the authors as it is in Paris. In the French capital the playwrights enjoy what are called *les droits d'auteur*; that is to say, each author is entitled to a certain proportion of the receipts of every night's performance while his piece is played.

The Académie Royale allows the author 500 francs for each of the first forty nights, and 200 francs for every subsequent night. The Théâtre Français gives one twelfth of the gross receipts, and the lower class of theatres, such as the Odéon, Variétés, Gymnase, &c., from one sixth to one eighth. The origin of this system is rather curious. In 1653 the actors of the Hotel de Bourgogne, who had promised Tristram l'Ermite 100 crowns for a comedy called 'Les Rivaies,' refused to give more than fifty when they discovered that it was by Quinault. The latter, however, eventu-

ally succeeded in obtaining one ninth of the receipts on each performance of his comedy. From this time the sharing system was established, and it prevails to this day.

It would not be easy to say what amount is annually paid to authors in this country for dramatic work, but we think we shall not be very far wrong in placing the limit at £10,000.

Gathering up our figures, then, we find the following result :—

Annual receipts of the London theatres . . . . .	£350,000
Ditto of the provincial theatres	388,000
Ditto of the London music halls, entertainments, and gardens	162,000
Ditto of the provincial music halls, entertainments, and gardens	178,500
	<hr/>

Total amount spent in public amusements . . . . .	£1,079,300
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Number of persons employed by London theatres . . . . .	4160
Ditto by the provincial theatres	4320
Ditto by the London music halls, entertainments, and gardens	1080

Ditto by the provincial music halls, entertainments, and gar- dens    ..    ..    ..    ..	1785
Total number of persons employed in amusing the public    ..	<hr/> 11,345 <hr/>

If we multiply this by three, as before, we shall have a total of some 34,000 persons who derive their means of subsistence from the business of amusing the public.

Having thus given some idea of the importance of public amusements as a commercial interest, it will not be out of place to add a few words with regard to the moral aspects of the actor's profession.

The ancient reproach which actors incurred when the law regarded them as vagabonds, and the clergy refused them Christian burial, is unhappily not altogether removed. There are many persons who firmly believe that the theatre, and everything connected with it, is very wicked, and that actors are all more or less dissolute and irreligious. These persons do not trouble themselves to reflect that theatrical affairs, like everything else, have undergone reformation with the course of time, and that managers and actors in

the conduct of themselves and their business have been obliged to conform to the improved habits and tastes of the age.

There was a time within the memory of those now living, when theatres were conducted upon principles which justly brought scandal upon the whole profession. Those were the days when idle and dissolute men, with a little money at their command, became managers just to indulge their passion for dabbling in theatrical affairs, and for the sake of being on intimate terms with actors and actresses. Managers of this class encouraged "bloods" and "swells" behind the scenes; and instead of catering for the public at large, secured titled visitors to their boxes and stalls by privately exhibiting the mysteries of their *coulisses*.

We all know what scandals came of this pernicious practice. But all this is changed now. Theatres have become commercial speculations in these days, and managers look for support only to the public at large. If any one thinks that "behind the scenes" of a theatre is still a wicked place, let him find a valid excuse—and nothing but "business" will avail him—to go "behind" at Drury-lane or the Adelphi. If he be unknown and unaccompanied by any one belonging to the theatre, he will probably be asked,

as soon as he has set foot on the stage, what business he has there. If he be allowed to remain, he will soon find himself in the way, for the stage of a theatre during the performance is a sternly busy place, and carpenters and scene-shifters setting and removing "flats" have no respect for persons.

Printed notices meet his eye on every hand. "Strict silence must be observed behind the scenes." "No one is allowed to stand in the wings." Let him visit the green-room and he will find all the proprieties of a private drawing-room observed with jealous punctiliousness. No one is admitted here who has not business in the theatre. Actors and actresses sit side by side on the sofas, waiting to be called to the stage, and in the mean time occupy themselves with pleasant chat, in reading, and the ladies with their sewing or embroidery.

The slanders which pursue young and attractive actresses are for the most part the malicious inventions of scandal-mongers. Certain reckless and uncharitable people set down every pretty girl who appears on the stage as a social outcast, just because a set of young and vicious fools run after her and make free with her name. Have we not been told over and over again that ladies,



whom we know to be happy wives and mothers, with children at their knee, are the mistresses of men whom they never saw in their lives ?

We hear these stories every day ; but it only requires us to step within the theatre to be convinced that they are, in most cases, reckless and wicked falsehoods. We do not wish to urge that actors and actresses are better than other people, but simply that they are no worse ; and perhaps if we were to take into account the temptations to which they are exposed, and the life of excitement they lead, we might justly give them credit for possessing at least some of the virtues in a higher degree than the members of other professions which are better esteemed.

## SOME RESPECTABLE THIEVES.

PHYSIOGNOMISTS will tell you that they cannot make a mistake about a really bad man. If he is really bad his features or his look will betray him. He cannot be bad and look good. Come, my physiognomist, walk with me into the City, and display your skill in reading the characters of some of the people we meet on our way. We are in Drury-lane, passing the end of Charles-street. Can you point me out a thief, think you, among that dirty, ragged, slouching crowd?

My physiognomist, who can tell a thief among ten thousand, points to a scowling fellow of the Bill Sykes type—a man with Newgate knockers in a velveteen jacket and a fur cap. That man is good for anything; burglary, highway robbery, murder. A thief obviously! And those boys in the greasy black suits, who walk in the middle of the road and exchange restless and suspicious glances when a policeman heaves in sight; do not

their heavy brows and sidelong looks proclaim them pickpockets ? The dirty Jew, who nods slyly to them as he passes: a receiver of stolen goods ? The slatternly, coarse-featured woman, who leans against the front of the public-house: a decoy ? The shabby genteel young man, with the closely shaven cheeks, wearing an old but glossy hat, and a profusion of sham jewellery: clearly a swell mobsman and a card sharper ? This is the dangerous quarter of Drury-lane, and the people are ragged and dirty, and scowling, and restless, and, according to the conventional notion, they are thieves all.

We have passed out of Drury-lane, down Fleet-street, up Ludgate-hill, and into Cheapside. Are there any thieves here, my physiognomist ? You say this is not the place to look for them. Ah, my friend, I fear your physiognomy is failing you. Where there are no rags, and no dirt, and no hungry and restless looks, you think there are no thieves. Let me try my skill. Look well at this gentleman in plain black. His clothes are new, and good, and of a sober fashion ; his linen is fine and neat ; he has a handsome gold repeater in his pocket, and his whole appearance is that of a substantial city man, who has a warehouse and clerks in town, and a comfortable villa and servants in

the country. Does that man look like a thief?

"Pooh, nonsense, you know him well; that is Mr Congou, the large wholesale tea merchant. He has a country-house at Broomley, is a churchwarden, a father of a family, a man universally respected by all who know him."

My friend, you mean by all who *don't* know him. I know Mr Congou, and I tell you he is a thief. Don't be alarmed, he will not pick your pocket of your handkerchief or your cash; he will not break into your home; nor stop you on the road and bid you stand and deliver. But he will rob you no less surely and constantly. I tell you, Mr Congou is a greater and more systematic thief than any of those you pointed out to me in Drury-lane. Those were petty retail thieves. Mr Congou is in the wholesale line. Against the violence of Bill Sykes, and the wiles of Charley Bates, and the Artful Dodger, you have the protection of the police; but there is no protection against the systematic predations of John Congou, Esquire, of Birchin-lane and Broomley, Chiselsex.

You don't believe it. That is excusable, perhaps, seeing that Mr Congou does not believe it himself. From the moment he enters his warehouse, in Sloe-lane, every morning at ten, until

the moment he leaves it in the evening, Mr Congou is engaged in thieving. Every transaction is a theft. And yet he conscientiously believes himself to be a thoroughly honest and respectable man. Singular instance of unawakened conscience! Ask the Dodger what he is, and he will reply, with the greatest candour, "Vot am I?—a prig, of course." The Dodger knows it, and owns it. Mr Congou does not know it, or he might own it too.

Understand me: when I say Mr Congou does not know that he is a thief, I mean that he has become so accustomed to his evil practices that he has lost all sense of their dishonesty. In this way he robs with the sanction of his conscience, and is thus a villain of a deeper dye than even Bill Sykes, who has his moments of remorse and repentance. Mr Congou robs rich and poor alike, and glories in his success. There is no chivalry about this respectable thief. Sykes would disdain to crack the crib of a needy neighbour, but Congou will rob a poor widow of her penny, with as little compunction as he will despoil a duchess of her pound. And his process of robbery is as deliberately dishonest as that of any vulgar pick-pocket.

Not long ago, before I knew Mr Congou to be

a villain, I was on visiting terms with him. I liked his country-house at Broomley, and enjoyed the society of his charming family. I went down occasionally on Saturday, and remained over Sunday. We always went to church in the morning, and the vicar dined with us in the afternoon, and we had sacred music in the drawing-room, and, after supper, Mr Congou read prayers. One Monday morning he invited me to accompany him to Sloe-lane, to see his tea-warehouse. I readily accepted the invitation. I was first introduced into a large room, the sides of which were lined with square boxes of tea, piled upon each other from roof to ceiling, the centre of the floor being left clear.

"These boxes," said Mr Congou, "contain the pure tea, just as it is imported from China; you will now see the process of preparing it for the English market."

"But," said I; "don't you sell the article in its pure state?"

"Never!" said my respectable friend, "and for two good and sufficient reasons. The first is, that the public are accustomed to have tea at a low price, and it is impossible to sell it at a profit without having recourse to the process of mixing. The second is a full justification of the

course we pursue. The public don't like pure tea; they prefer it made up—just as they prefer public-house beer to the pure unadulterated article direct from the brewery. So, you see that, in what we do, we are simply ministering to the tastes and requirements of the public. Now, observe this box of tea. Come to the light, and look at a handful of it. You see it is of a very dull colour, and looks more like broom cuttings than tea. It is tea, however—genuine tea; but, unfortunately, the public won't have it until we have put a gloss upon it. And yet it is necessary, in order to please the retailer, that we should send it out in the original Chinese boxes, the leaden lining of which must not appear to have been broken."

"How do you manage that?" I inquired.

The process was then performed before my eyes. The whole of the tea in the leaden case was shaken out through a small round hole in the top into a heap on the floor. This had to be done carefully, so as to avoid splitting the thin leaden case; and the process occupied some time.

"Now," said my respectable friend, "we mix the contents of this chest with other kinds; some of this, for instance, some of that, and a little of

the other, according to our market. And now, perhaps, you are puzzled to know how we get the whole weight of tea back into that leaden case through this small hole?"

I confessed that I was puzzled by this, particularly as the tea would require to be closely packed.

"Ah! that's just the difficulty," said Mr Congou; "but we get over it in this way. When the tea is mixed to suit our customers, we put in with the hands about as much as covers the bottom of the case, and then our packer, Herbert, inserts his foot, and, seizing that rope which you see attached to the wall there, stamps it down. Another layer is scattered in, and the stamping process is repeated; and this goes on until the tea is near the top, when the pressing is done with the hand."

"By this ingenious process, then," said I, "you make the retail dealer believe that the box of tea has never been touched since it was packed in China."

"Well; not exactly," said my respectable friend; "the fact is, the retailer is well aware that every dealer must have his legitimate profit. I know that the Chinaman must have *his*, you know, and the retailer knows that *I* must have



*mine*; but I assure you that it is this clumsy fellow of a retailer who spoils all."

"You don't mean to tell me," said I, "that he adulterates too, after you and John Chinaman have both had your turn?"

"I regret to say I do mean that," said Mr Congou, with a sad shake of the head. "Magnesia and Prussian blue are necessary to give tea its proper colour; but the Chinaman and the small dealer are such cheats that they will not be content with that. Very possibly this box, before I touched it, contained about 40 per cent. of lie tea."

"Lie tea; pray, what is that?"

"Why, tea that is all a lie; something that is not tea at all,—a mixture of colouring matter, rice flour, tea dust, and the sweepings of the tea floors. But those rascals of retail dealers practise all sorts of dodges. At one time they used to mix our tea with hawthorn and sloe leaves, and even with leaves that had been used. Perhaps you would not believe it, but it was once the custom, and, I believe, it is the custom still, for certain parties to go round to hotels and coffee-houses, and collect the old tea-leaves for the purpose of being dried and sold over again as good sound congou."

"Is there not," I asked, "a substance used in the adulteration of tea called, in the slang of the trade, 'La veno beno?'"

"Yes; those confounded retail fellows use it; but we never do, of course. The analysts have found it to contain 14 per cent. of sloe or hedge leaves and 86 of catechu; but it sometimes contains many other things besides those—iron filings, for example."

"Iron filings! Oh, nonsense; you surely don't go the length of iron filings!"

"Excuse me; you said, '*you.*' Now *we* don't indulge in such practices; we only *mix*, the retailers *adulterate*."

This, then, is your respectable man, my superficial physiognomist. This is your honest tradesman. This man, by his own confession, deliberately deceives the retailer by slyly inserting inferior tea into the Chinese boxes and selling the article as "untouched," "exactly as imported." But is this all? What kind of tea is it that he mixes with the genuine article? Is it simply an inferior quality of tea? I know that specimens of tea were bought at Mr Congou's establishment for the purpose of analysis, and this was the chemist's report:—"I found redried leaves; other leaves, those of beech, elm, bastard

plane, fancy oak, and willow, made up to represent tea with gum, Dutch pink, Prussian blue, and indigo, carbonate of magnesia, French chalk, and sulphate of lime." Such is the state of our tea as it comes from the warehouse of Mr Congou. But before it reaches our tables it passes through the hands of another respectable tradesman, the retailer, and he adds iron filings and occasionally a little sulphate of copper. And these men go to church and say their prayers, and are accounted respectable members of society !

Mr Congou has a horror of dishonest practices. He complained to me very bitterly of the robbery he was subjected to by his warehousemen and servants. I saw in the papers, the other day, that he had been under the painful necessity of prosecuting his porter for appropriating money with which he had been entrusted to pay bills. Mr Congou was accommodated with a seat on the bench ; and the magistrate expressed great sympathy for respectable merchants like Mr Congou, who were thus mercilessly robbed by their servants. The dishonest porter was duly committed for trial, and subsequently sentenced to penal servitude on its being proved that he abstracted from his master's premises and sold several packets of magnesia—the magnesia which

the respectable Mr Congou used to give a glossy appearance to his redried tea-leaves. Come, Diogenes, re-trim your lamp, and let us resume our search for an honest man; for certainly we have not found one in the much-esteemed Mr Congou, tea-dealer, of Sloe-lane and Broomley, Chiselsex.

Be good enough to turn your bull's eye upon Mr Noggins, of the Crown and Cushion. Is he not the beau-ideal of a respectable, well-to-do, worthy citizen? Mr Noggins has a very respectable appearance, indeed. He has that high-dried, venerable aspect, which is always imparted by a brown scratch wig; he has that solidity of personal appearance which is invariably produced by a rotund stomach and a black satin waistcoat; he is a reflection of constituted authority, in virtue of his constable's staff, which hangs by the fireplace behind the bar; he is a father of a family; the coroner holds inquests in his upper room; he pays taxes, sits on juries, wears a diamond ring, and is a respectable man, as well in his own estimation as in that of his neighbours and the public, who knew him as an active supporter of the Licensed Victuallers' charities.

Yes, Mr Noggins is a good man as the world

goes, but he is an arrant rogue for all that. You wouldn't think it to see him up here in the bar. He is so mild, so obliging, so unsophisticated in all his ideas and views. He is not a bit of a hypocrite either. He will sit and smoke his pipe during the quiet period of the evening, and his conscience will never trouble him. He has nothing to reproach himself with. He feels that he has done his work and his duty, and if his takings have been good, he is satisfied with himself and all the world.

Let us talk to Mr Noggins. He is a most affable man, and, like all respectable people, has patience to converse about the weather. A man who can at all times talk with patience and with interest about the weather, must be a person of great respectability or of extreme amiability. An interest in the weather betokens an interest in the affairs of the country generally, and in the crops particularly, and bespeaks solicitude for the welfare of the population at large.

A man who has these sympathies, like Mr Noggins, is generally one who has a stake in the state. As a rule, such people are conservative. Mr Noggins is conservative. He is a staunch supporter of Church and State in everything except as regards the law which compels him to

close in church hours on Sunday, and the billeting system,—measures which he deems to be inconsistent with the constitution and those principles of free-trade which he admires as applied to all branches of commerce, especially to the privilege of selling beer and spirits to be drunk on the premises.

You will find Mr Noggins to be a man of large human sympathies. He is concerned for the poor people when provisions are dear. He deplores a strike or a lock-out as much as any man. He will subscribe for a poor neighbour cheerfully. He will even trust a poor customer, if he knows him to be "hard up" and deserving. He will bear losses (in consequence) with resignation, satisfied with having done a good action from a pure motive. In his domestic relations he is a pattern to society at large. Mrs Noggins will tell you that no woman in the world has a better or a kinder husband than she has. And Mrs Noggins's plump figure, her cheerful face, her glossy black satin, her heavy gold chain, and her massive ear-rings, all endorse the confession. Mr Noggins is the kindest and most indulgent of men.

There is nothing in which Mr Noggins's respectability and sense of propriety are so strikingly illustrated, as in the jealous care which he takes

to keep his young children out of the bar, and thus exclude them from the evil influence of rough talk and unseemly behaviour. The publican, like the actor, seems to have some sense of a want of complete respectability in his occupation ; and he generally begins life with the resolution that none of his children shall " go to the bar." The exigences of his business often defeat this excellent intention ; but as a rule the children of publicans receive a very good education. The young Nogginses are all at boarding-school ; and the elder Miss Noggins, when she comes home for the holidays, is the admiration of all the customers for full five weeks, by her constant and admirable performance of the " Battle of Prague " on the semi-grand in the bar-parlour.

Have I not said enough to convince any reasonable man that Mr Noggins of the Crown and Cushion is a good husband, a good father, a good neighbour, and a respectable member of society ? There is only one point on which I am at all doubtful. I am not quite sure that Mr Noggins goes to church regularly. In fact I am rather disposed to think that he does not go to church regularly. This fact—if fact it be—is the only thing which in any degree detracts from the full measure of respectability which Mr Noggins has

attained to in virtue of his otherwise upright conduct as a man and a licensed victualler. I am not inclined, however, to make a charge against Mr Noggins on this account. Public duties—which may be ranked as works of necessity and mercy—interfere with church-going in other respectable professions. A doctor has his patients to attend to in church-time, a minister of state has despatches to write, and Mr Noggins must be prepared to draw beer as the clock strikes one. And who will say that the British public need physic and diplomacy more than beer at one o'clock on Sundays?

But why should I enumerate all these things to convince you, my physiognomist, that Mr Noggins is a respectable man. You saw his respectability at a glance. Well; I am sorry to have bored you with a psychological diagnosis, and you must be dry. What will you please to take? A glass of Mr Noggins's best porter. You are thirsty. I am not; and, as it is after dinner, perhaps I may be allowed to partake of a little of Mr Noggins's best gin, warm, with sugar. How's your porter? it seems to have a good head. Yes; and it has just that sharp taste you like. I am glad to hear it. My gin seems to be good according to all the rules of judgment. You saw how it



creamed up in the measure; you see how it adheres to the glass, and trickles down slowly like oil; and I can assure you that it is as hot i' the mouth as I could desire. I feel certain that another glass or two would get into my head, and also into my legs.

It is wonderful how irregular legs get in their motion, after standing some time in Mr Noggins's bar. He keeps good liquor. Yes, he does, my friend; but you and I have utterly forgotten what good liquor is. You may not believe it; but I think it probable that you have not tasted good, pure porter half a dozen times in your life. I may say the same of myself as regards gin, brandy, rum, whisky, and every other spirit and drink that is sold across these pewter counters. Come, Diogenes, a light, and let us descend these dark cellar-stairs, and see how the respectable Mr Noggins provides us with drink. Mind your footing. Take care of that net-work of leaden pipes. They will kill you to a certainty some day; but you need not break your neck over them.

Be seated, gentlemen: there is a barrel each for you. Diogenes, my friend, stick your half-penny dip in that empty bottle, and let us see what there is to be seen. Here are the beer

butts. This one contains porter. Now, perhaps, you believe that, when the brewer's man lowered this cask into the cellar, Mr Noggins immediately inserted the end of the leaden pipe leading to the engine, and began to draw from it. There you would be wrong. I'll tell you the scene you might have witnessed here, when Mr Noggins shut himself up in this cellar with that butt of beer. First of all, he drew off a large tub full of it. Then he set to work to mix up a liquor in another tub. And when this last liquor was fully mixed, it was poured into the butt from which the porter was taken. Would you like to know what this mysterious liquor was? Mr Noggins put in a great many ingredients—something from a bottle; something from a large paper bag; something from a box; something from a dirty frothy four-and-a-half gallon cask.

To begin with them, the pellucid liquor in the tub was literally the elementary "liquor" of the brewer—water. The something in the bottle was either sulphuric acid or oil of vitriol, or sulphate of iron; the something from the box was *coccus indicus*; and the something from the four-and-a-half gallon cask was—but you know that four-and-a-half gallon—it is, sometimes, a nine gallon—cask. Did you never notice that, when

the brewer's men bring a load of huge beer butts to a public-house, there is always a little baby cask in their company ; a delicate, though dirty-looking bantling, which is tenderly carried down-stairs after them, as if it were an infantile member of the family, that cannot bear to be parted from papa and mamma, and its big brothers ? That little cask comes from the brewer's like the big ones, and while *they* contain pure porter, *it* contains a mixture of wort-flower and *salt*. This mixture is pleasantly called "Finings."

Now, my friend, you know what you have been drinking up-stairs. Something like 30 per cent. of the alcohol in this butt of porter has been lost by the process I have described. The water, of course, reduced the strength of the beer, and then the sugar, the sulphate of iron, and the finings were put in, to give it a semblance of those qualities which it had lost. That froth which you admired so much, and that sharpness which suits your taste so exactly, are produced by sulphate of iron—which is a poison ! There is not a butt of beer of any kind in this cellar that is not adulterated before the engine pipe is "put on." The stout is treated very much like the porter, with the addition of molasses ; and the ales are "improved to suit the taste of the public," with

gentian, cocculus indicus, and occasionally, though rarely, perhaps, with *nux vomica*—the two last, virulent poisons.

You are beginning to suspect that you have been greatly deceived in Mr Noggins, and that he must be much worse than his brethren in the trade. You have been deceived, it is true ; but don't do Mr Noggins injustice, he is not nearly so bad as many. It may be safely said, that there is not a publican in London who does not adulterate his beer—and chiefly with the express object of making more money out of it than he could do if he sold it in its genuine state, as it comes from the brewery.

So universal is this practice that there are actually persons who solely devote themselves to the manufacture and sale of drugs for the adulteration of beer ; and, more than that, there are Beer and Spirit Doctors, persons who visit public-houses and put the liquors to rights—that is, to wrongs—for a small fee. Young and inexperienced publicans are obliged to employ the doctor until, by experience, they learn the art themselves. Some brewers, who are jealous for the reputation of their beer, employ a traveller, who visits the houses periodically, and tastes the various beers, to see that they are not reduced too much. This

functionary is called the Broad Cooper. When the Broad Cooper looks in upon Mr Noggins, and wants to taste the porter, and the porter is below the mark, Mr Noggins slyly draws a dash of stout into it. And this trick is so common and so well known, that a mixture of stout and porter has come to be known to the public, and asked for by the name of "Cooper."

Now as to my gin, which creamed so beautifully, and gave other unmistakable signs of its purity—why, it is even worse than your porter. Pure gin, I believe, should be made of alcohol, flavoured with juniper berry. I think I have tasted this pure article in the country long ago. I remember it was quite a rarity, and was kept only for grand occasions. Schiedam is the only spirit that at all reminds me of it. But gin is quite a different thing now-a-days. The spirit which forms the basis of modern gin is in most cases made from raw grain. It is the coarsest and commonest kind of spirit produced, and is converted into gin, so called, by the admixture of some special preparations, called gin-flavourings, made from oil of cinnamon, cassia, noyau, &c.

This spirit, common as it is, is almost universally adulterated by the publicans. Water is the chief element of dilution, as in the case of

beer, and when the strength of the gin is thus reduced, cayenne pepper, grains of paradise, and *cocculus indicus* are used to bring up its strength, or rather pungency. Other ingredients are employed to give it the known appearance of pure spirit. Sugar is the least harmless of these; but there are others. Subcarbonate of potash and alum are used for fining, substances eminently calculated to produce colic and constipation; oil of almonds and oil of vitriol to give flavour, and produce the heading which is reckoned so sure a test of the genuine article; and even sulphuric acid is to be detected in gin. When the analytical doctors examined specimens of gin some years ago, they unanimously declared their belief that pure gin was "not to be had in London, from publicans at any rate." When I drank that glass of gin and water up-stairs, I swallowed a certain quantity of poison—how much I don't know—but there could not be the smallest doubt that there was poison in it to some extent.

Would you like to know what are the component parts of Mr Noggins's brandy,—that brandy which you send for when you are ill, and take as a medicine? Genuine brandy of the best quality is made by submitting strong Bordeaux wine to distillation; and the peculiar odour is due

to a portion of essential spirit, or ether, which distils with the alcohol. But I assure you strong Bordeaux has nothing to do with Mr Noggins's cognac. It is just a common raw spirit, made to resemble brandy by admixture with an essential oil, which has the odour of that particular ether to which brandy owes its flavour. This essential oil, and many others of a similar kind, are produced by artificial means from grain.

Then as to this fine pine-apple Jamaica rum : it never saw Jamaica—never was near Jamaica, and has as much connection with pine-apples as the cognac has with grapes. It is simply a home-made spirit, to which the flavour of pine-apple has been given by the introduction of a few drops of one of those new essences, the production of which is one of the most beautiful discoveries of modern chemistry. , Perhaps you think the essence is made from pine-apple ; it is almost a pity to disenchant you ; but the fact is, it is produced from a peculiar kind of rotten cheese by treatment with sulphuric acid and bichromate of potash.

And Mr Noggins sells us all these adulterated and poisonous articles well knowing them to be what they are. Shall we say, then, that Mr Noggins is a respectable man—an honest man ? It is

true that he drinks his own liquor, and so cheats and poisons himself as he cheats and poisons his customers. But this only shows that dishonesty has become so general among the trading community that they have lost all sense of its heinousness and impropriety. Trade is so completely given over to sophistication that even those who practise it cannot escape their own snares. It has come to this, that the tea-dealer must drink a decoction of his own sloe-leaves; the baker must eat his own alumed bread; and the publican must wash down his dinner with his own poisonous beer.



## BOODLE'S DOG.

WHEN I set out in life with virtuous resolutions, and a mind well fortified with the precepts and example of my pastors and masters, I little dreamt that I should ever be concerned in a deliberate act of dog-stealing. Well knowing the innate wickedness of the human heart, and being fully sensible of the overwhelming power of temptation in desperate circumstances, I might have conceived it possible that I should one day be driven to take undue advantage of my neighbour by selling him razors which were not made to shave; by borrowing his deposit in a savings bank, of which I might be manager; by forging his signature to a bill which I meant to take up when due; or by some other of the various comparatively innocent methods which many distinguished personages have been known to adopt under the pressure of adverse fortune; but that I should ever fall so low as to league myself with

vulgar ruffians to steal an honest man's dog never entered even my most fevered and delirious dreams.

Yet I am guilty of this crime. I avow it, and with this confession I give myself up to justice. The reader may suppose that, previously to committing this act, I had fallen into evil ways ; that Fortune had cast me off ; that sharp misery had worn me to the bone ; or that I had become an associate of dog-fanciers and low sporting characters.

No such thing. When I deliberately stole that dog, I was a householder and a ratepayer ; butchers and bakers were besieging me for the honour and profit of my patronage ; I was getting stout, and required an extra quarter of a yard of broad cloth for my surtouts ; I was newly elected a member of the Athanasian Club, and was beginning to be noticed by Bishops and Fellows of the Royal Society.

As for sporting literature, I declare upon my honour that " Bell's Life " is Greek to me. Nay, worse than Greek ; for, reversing the preference of Mr Cobden, I can truly say that I can find more intelligible and agreeable reading in the pages of " Thucydides " than in the columns of " Bell's Life." Nor had I a fancy for dogs. I never owned a dog in my life ; had no desire to

possess a dog ; and scarcely knew the difference between a mastiff and a Skye terrier. And yet I conspired to steal a dog, and stole it—and that stolen dog is now lying on the hearth-rug at my feet while I write this account of how I stole him.

It was in this wise. I have been in the habit for some years, on my occasional holidays, of going out to a quiet suburban tavern to play quoits. One day, some months ago, as I was leaving the ground, and passing through the bar, the landlord said to me—

“Look here a minute, sir ; I’ll tell you a good story. You know little Jones that plays quoits here sometimes ?”

“Always has two or three dogs with him ?”

“Yes.”

“And wears a very high shirt collar ?”

“Yes, that’s him. We call him ‘Collars.’”

“Well, what of him ?”

“Such a lark, sir. You’ve seen that white Maltese dog of his, with the white wool, like, all over his eyes.”

“Yes ; but I was not aware that it was a Maltese dog. What then ?”

“Jones, sir, bought that dog of one of them downy cards in Regent Street. You’ve seen the chap down here ; wears a velvet coat, with pock-

ets, and generally has a little dog peeping out of each on 'em. Give him three sovereigns for the dog. Well, what do you think? About a fortnight afterwards, as Jones was walking down Oxford Street with his dog, as proud as Punch, carrying him, you know, in his arms—up comes a man—name of Boodle—a cowkeeper; and says he to Jones—

“ ‘That’s my dog!’

“ ‘No, it ain’t,’ says Jones; ‘it’s mine; I’ve bought and paid for him.’

“ ‘I don’t care for that,’ says Boodle; ‘it’s my dog, and I’ll have him.’

“ ‘You won’t,’ says Jones.

“ ‘Won’t I?’” says Boodle, and then he holloas out to a policeman who was passing, and if he didn’t give Jones into custody then and there! Jones swore he was a gentleman—as he is, you know, and lots of tin, too—but they wouldn’t believe him, and as he wouldn’t part with the dog, they locked him up.

“ Well, old Boodle proved that it was his dog, and Jones was obliged to come away without the animal, after having been locked up all night in the station. Jones was awful wild, and commenced an action against the cowkeeper for false imprisonment; but when the day of hearing came,

Jones was unwell, and the case went against him by default of his appearance. Jones had to pay all the costs, and was wilder still.

“ And what do you think he done, sir, to spite the cowkeeper? Why he employs the ‘ card ’ he originally bought the dog of, and another chap, a pal of his, to steal the dog back again; and they done it, sir—and Jones has got the dog now over in Paris, or somewheres, to be out of the way.”

Here the landlord of the “ Cock and Bottle ” went into an ecstatic fit of laughter at the idea of Jones’s cleverness. I was amused myself, and went away much more impressed with Jones’s talents than I had ever been before. I was still chuckling over the exploit of Jones, when I met my friend Walker, who was going into the city. Walker is a man who always begins the conversation when he meets you, by saying, “ Well, what’s the news ? ”

My latest information being this dog story, I told it to him just as I got it from Mr Harris, of the “ Cock and Bottle.” Walker was amused, and laughed heartily, as Mr Harris had done, and as I had done, indeed, never thinking of the criminal nature of the proceeding on Jones’s part, nor of the injury to the worthy keeper of cows.

You see it was one of those rogueries which

are always redeemed by the comically adroit way in which they are committed. It reminded Walker of our mutual friend Hopkins, who swindles his creditors in such a jocular way, that they are rather pleased than otherwise, and are willing to be swindled again by the same pleasant process.

"Very good indeed," said Walker, as we were shaking hands to part. "By the way, what sort of dog was it?"

"Woolly, white dog ; Maltese, I believe."

Walker chuckled again, and we parted.

I dismissed that dog affair from my mind forthwith, and probably should never have had occasion to recall it, had I not mentioned the subject to Walker. But that very evening, when I was settling myself in my easy-chair for a quiet, after-dinner snooze, an impatient double knock came to the door, and in walked friend Walker.

"Here's a lark!" said Walker, almost the moment he entered the room. As Walker was in the habit of calling everything, comic and serious indifferently, a lark, I expressed some anxiety: for I knew that he would say "Here's a lark!" if he had just received intelligence that my bank had broke, or that my house had caught fire.

“ Well, what is it ? ”

“ That dog—such a lark ! ”

“ Well.”

“ Well, you remember telling me the story about what’s-his-name employing the fellows to steal him back from the cowkeeper.”

“ Yes, of course I do.”

Here Walker was so tickled with his “ lark,” whatever it was, that he could not continue for laughing. At length, when he had indulged his fancy, he went on—

“ I was thinking of that story all the way into town ; and going into Hornsey’s print-shop, still grinning over it, Hornsey said, “ What’s amusing you, sir ? ”

“ Such a lark, Hornsey ! ” I said, and then I told him the story. But I had scarcely got to the end of it, when Hornsey started as if he had been shot, and crying out to his lad, “ Mind the shop, John,” bolted out into the street without his hat. Well, I thought, Hornsey’s gone mad. But he came back presently. And what do you think made him bolt that way ? ”

“ Don’t know, I’m sure ! ”

“ Why he knows the cowkeeper that owns the dog, and he ran round to tell him how his dog had been stolen from him.”

"You surely didn't mention my name in the matter?" I asked, rather anxiously.

"Well, 'pon my word, I did," said Walker. "Thinking it was only a lark, I mentioned your name at the beginning—said I heard the story from you, and that you heard it from what's-his-name, of the 'Cock and Bottle.'"

"I'm afraid that may be awkward."

"Oh, nonsense," said Walker; "*you* didn't steal the dog."

"But—" I was about to say that my name might be mixed up in unpleasant proceedings, when my speech was checked by a thundering single rap at the outer door. Almost immediately I heard loud, angry, and unfamiliar accents in the passage.

"Please, sir," said the servant, "a man wants to see you."

"What sort of person is he?"

"Well, he is rather an odd-looking man, sir; and I think he said his name was Boodle."

"The cowkeeper, by Jove!" cried Walker; "here's a lark!"

"Well, it may be a lark for you, Walker, but—"

"Why, I shall be on it as well as you, you know," said Walker.



"On what?" I said.

"On the trial, as witness; case of dog-stealing."

"I shan't see this man, tell him so." But Boodle had stolen a march on me. He was on the door-mat outside, and heard my words, and the next instant he entered, and said—

"Ye maun; ye maun see me. I'm here, and my name's John Boodle, cowkeeper, of Drury-lane; and I understand as how you know all about the stealing of my dog; and I'll have you oop as a witness."

John Boodle was a terrible-looking personage in my dainty little snugery. I dare say he would have looked very picturesque, and all that sort of thing, out in a field, or in a cow-shed, but John Boodle with a huge, glazed hat on his head, his high-lowed feet emulating the proportions of an elephant's, and arrayed as to his middle man in a green smock-frock which emitted an atmosphere of cows in a sort of vaccine sirocco, which pervaded the whole room in a moment, was an object of unpleasant portent.

And his terrible aspect was further aggravated by his hands, which were so large and red and plump, that you might have imagined them to be boxing-gloves of flesh and blood; and by his

eyes, which were not on a line, and were disproportionate as to the amount of white they exhibited. I saw all this in a moment, and was rather glad that Walker was with me.

"I'll have you oop as a witness," repeated John Boodle.

"But, my good man, how do you know that—"

"I know it, becos o' that ere paper. There's your name—'Parker.' Hornsey wrote it down. And he told me as you told a gen'leman, a friend of his—"

"Name of Walker," I suggested.

"No, Brown," said Walker, who thought he was going to escape.

"No; it wasn't Brown," said Boodle. "Walker's the name. I've got that down too." Walker winced.

And Boodle went on again. "And Hornsey told me as how a gen'leman, a friend of his—name of Walker—told him as another gen'leman, Mr Parker—that's you, sir—was told by Mr 'Arris, of The Cock and Bottle, that that ere Jones—I know him—give two fellows three sovereigns to steal my dog, and that they stole him accordin'. Is that right, sir, or is it not?"

"Well! really, Mr Boodle, I cannot mix myself up with these matters. I didn't steal your

dog, you know. You had better go to Jones : he seems to be the party."

"Very well, sir; as you'll not give a 'onest man no satisfaction, I'll go to Jones. I'll have Jones took oop, sir, for dog-stealing, on your information; and I'll have you oop, sir, as a witness agen him."

I could hear Walker muttering, "What a lark!" to himself, as the cowkeeper abruptly left the room, taking the great source of the sirocco with him; and I called out—

"Mr Boodle, there is that other party—"

"Yes; I know—Walker," Mr Boodle growled from the passage. "I'll have him oop too. I'll have all on ye oop." And with that Mr Boodle went down the stairs like ill-regulated thunder, and banged the door after him by way of a grand concluding crash.

"Well!" I said to Walker, "what do you think of it now?" He would insist that it was only a lark.

"Yes," I said, "it is all very well for you; you don't care. But I decidedly object to have my name appearing in the papers in connection with a dog-stealing case. I have something to study as a professional man. And then, what will the people say at the Athanasian Club?"

"Oh! bother the Athanasian Club—set of prigs."

"Prigs! Let me tell you that—"

"Oh! nonsense; they are prigs. Didn't you tell me yourself that the very waiters are so solemn that you are afraid of offending them by asking them to bring you a chop?"

"Walker, this is adding insult to injury."

"What do you mean by injury, sir?"

"Injury! Didn't you tell Hornsey about that confounded dog, and get me into this scrape?"

"Well! come, I like that. Didn't you tell me about it?"

Walker and I came to high words; but in the end we smoked the pipe of peace, and dispelled at once the memory and the effluvium of Boodle. But when Walker went away the memory of Boodle came back and troubled me in my dreams, wherein I saw Boodle in his elephantine highlows, with his milk-pails swinging at his side, stalking through the affrighted Bishops and Fellows of the Royal Society in the library of the Athanasian Club to lay his great hand upon my shoulder and say, "I'll have you oop as a witness against Jones as stole my dog."

Boodle's natural boxing glove is still upon

my uneasy shoulder, when I am awakened by loud and urgent knocking at the outer door.

"Please, sir, a gentleman wants to see you."

"Tell him I'm not up. Who is he? He's not the man that was here last night?"

"No, sir; not that man."

"Oh! a *man*, eh? Just ask him his name."

"Please, sir, he says his name is Harris."

"Harris—Harris. I don't know anybody of the name of Harris. Let me see, though. Harris of The Cock and Bottle! Can it be he?"

I dressed, and went down-stairs. Harris of "The Cock and Bottle" it was! That dog business again. I groaned in spirit. I was right. Boodle had gone to Harris after he had left me the night before, and Harris had denied everything; and now Mr Harris had come to me to make the modest request that, being upon my oath at the trial, I should deny everything too.

"I told him," said Mr Harris, "that I knew nothing about it; and I mean to stick to that. Don't you know nothing about it neither, sir?"

"Well," I said, "I *don't* know anything about it, except what you told me. And I wish you hadn't told me."

"And so do I, sir," said Mr Harris. "I don't want to get into trouble, and I don't want to

offend Jones, who is a good customer. I shall stick to it, that I know nothing about it."

"That is all very well, Mr Harris," I said. "I don't want to get into trouble over the affair any more than you ; but if I should be summoned, I must state the truth. I must repeat what you told me. And, let me tell you, it will be an awkward affair for Jones. It will be nothing short of House of Correction."

"You don't mean that, sir ?"

"I do, though : it's theft and conspiracy into the bargain. The best you can do is to advise Jones to give the dog back before he gets himself and you too into trouble."

"He won't do it, sir. He's sent him down into the country—to Brighton, or Cheltenham, or somewhere, to be out of the way. And he says that if it costs him a hundred pounds Boodle shan't have that dog again."

"Well, he'll only have himself to blame if he is sent to prison as a felon."

"I shouldn't like to have any hand in that, sir ; and I hope you won't mention me in the matter."

"But I must, Mr Harris, if I am called upon."

"Oh ! don't, sir," said Mr Harris. "I beg you won't. You'll get me into trouble."

"You don't consider that I shall get into trouble too, Mr Harris."

"Then you shouldn't have repeated what I told you, sir."

"Then why did you tell me? I did not want to hear your confounded story, and I am not going to be bullied in my own house about a wretched dog. And I wish you a good day, Mr Harris; and I trust you will not trouble me about this matter again." And with that I showed Mr Harris the way out, and banged the door against him in wrath.

"A very pretty affair indeed," I thought to myself at breakfast, "that a respectable professional man, and a member of the Athanasian Club, should be mixed up in a low transaction of this kind. This comes of frequenting a tavern and playing quoits, and listening to the talk of the persons that one meets there. Confound Jones and his dog."

The words were scarcely out of my mouth when a knock came to the door, and the servant entered to announce Mr Hornsey.

"Hornsey—Hornsey! who is he? What sort of man is he?"

"Man with hook nose, sir, and black eyes. Looks like—"

"Like what?"

"Like Punch, sir."

"Like Punch! I know a man that looks like Punch. Everybody says he looks like Punch. The boys call him Punch. Why! it's Hornsey, the print-seller. That dog again. Say I'm not at home: say I'm gone abroad. Stop: say I'm dead at once. That's the best way to settle it."

"But please, sir, he said he knew you were at home, because your hat and gloves were on the hall table."

"Trust Hornsey with those eyes and that nose of his for spying out a thing like that. Well, show him up." And immediately Hornsey entered my room, his eyes walking before him in a procession of two, with his nose, like a drum-major in full uniform, in the middle. Of course it was the dog business. Hornsey had come to say that Boodle was mad about that dog.

"He don't care so much about the animal itself, sir," said Hornsey; "but Boodle don't like to be bested. He said to me only this morning, 'Hornsey, if you can get that dog back you may keep him; but have him I will, if it costs me a hundred pounds.'"

"Well, Mr Hornsey, how can I—"



"Just what I was coming to, sir. You know where the dog is?"

"Indeed I don't, Mr Hornsey."

"But didn't you tell Mr Walker that that party—Jones, I think his name is—had sent him somewhere to be out of the way; didn't you say to Cheltenham or Brighton? Now, which was it, sir?"

Here a grand idea suddenly occurred to me, and I said—

"Neither, Mr Hornsey. The dog, I believe, is—indeed I may say I know—is in Paris."

"Paris," said Hornsey. "Boodle will send after him. He don't mind the distance; he don't mind the money. Paris! Boodle will have him. Thank you, sir. Good day. Sorry to have troubled you."

"Stop, Mr Hornsey," I said, beginning to repent of sending Boodle on a wild-goose chase, and being struck with another grand idea. "Boodle does not want to be vindictive against Jones; he only wants his dog."

"That's it, sir; only wants the dog."

"Then take my advice; employ the same fellows to steal the dog back again. They'll soon find him out if you'll pay them well."

Hornsey was in ecstasies with the idea, and

slapped his thigh with so much enthusiastic admiration that he evidently hurt himself.

"Capital, sir, capital! Boodle will do it. It will be cheapest, after all, and save trouble. Good day, sir."

I was relieved for the moment. If Boodle succeeded in stealing the dog back there would be an end of the matter. There would be no criminal proceedings against Jones, and no necessity for summoning me as a witness. This was all I cared about.

The Bishops and the Fellows of the Royal Society at the Athanasian Club would never know that I played quoits at "The Cock and Bottle," and had been mixed up in a case of dog-stealing. I snapped my fingers in triumph.

But, stay—was it the effort of snapping my fingers that brought on this reflection? Supposing Jones should dispute the matter. There might be a trial after all; I should be summoned as a witness, and, in addition to having to confess that I was mixed up in a case of dog-stealing, it might be elicited from me in cross-examination that I had actually advised Hornsey to steal the dog from Jones. Oh! this was infinitely worse. I had got myself into a pretty scrape now.

I was in a most unhappy frame of mind until

I had seen Walker; and when I had seen Walker, my frame of mind was more unhappy still. Walker dissipated all my hopes in an instant. Boodle, he said, had sought high and low for the dog—had sent to Cheltenham, to Brighton, and even to Paris; and not being able to find him had resolved to summon Jones for illegal possession, and me and others to give evidence against him. Learning from Walker that the step was to be taken at once, I thought it would be prudent to go out of town for a few days, and I went to Brighton.

It was pleasant to walk on the Marine Parade, with the fresh wind blowing upon me from the sea, and think that I was out of reach of Boodle. I could snap my fingers now at Boodle and all his myrmidons.

Is there anything unlucky, anything provocative of fate, anything calculated to tempt retribution in that act of snapping the finger and thumb? I ask because I had scarcely indulged in the act when I saw coming towards me a little man with a very high shirt-collar. It was Jones—Jones, who had procured the ruffians to steal Boodle's dog. And what was the object that Jones carried in his arms? Was it a lady's white boa hanging out of his breast pocket? Was it— By Jove it was

the dog—Boodle's dog—the dog that Jones had stolen—the dog of all my trouble and anxiety !

People who only nod to each other in London, shake hands and become friendly in strange and distant places. Jones and I had a long talk together. I told him how I had been bothered out of my life about his, or rather Boodle's, dog. He had heard all about it, and was delighted. He was like Walker, and regarded the whole affair as a good lark. I represented to him the danger that he ran of being convicted of dog-stealing. He only went into a fit of laughter. I advised him to restore the dog at once to Boodle. He said he would see Boodle hanged first, and laughed again.

"Nonsense," said Jones. "Look at him ; isn't he a paragon ?"

"Well, he looks to me like a ball of wool, and nothing else. I can't tell which is his head and which is his tail."

"That's the beauty of the beast," said Jones. "Come up to the 'York' in the evening and take coffee, and I'll make him go through his tricks. He's a clever one, I can tell you."

I promised to do so, and we parted. Perhaps, thought I, if I have a quieter opportunity, I may be able to persuade Jones to do what's right

and restore the dog to Boodle—Boodle! can I believe my eyes? Am I enchanted, haunted, a victim to second sight, or what? I had scarcely mentioned the man's name to myself when he stood before me.

There he was in his best Sunday clothes gazing at the Pavilion. He had come down by the excursion train for a holiday, or, more likely, to search for his dog. The situation was now getting critical. We were coming to close quarters indeed. The case was desperate. I addressed Boodle; but I had scarcely said "Mr Boodle" before he began upon me.

"Won't you give a 'onest man no satisfaction?"

"One moment, Mr Boodle."

"I tell you I'll have you oop as a witness."

"Listen to one word, Mr Boodle. When do you return to town?"

"By the eight o'clock train."

"And where do you put up?"

"At the Greyhound in East Street."

"Mr Boodle, before you return to town I may be able to give you the satisfaction you require."

I was off at once to Jones's, though it was some time before the appointed hour. Now, I thought, if I can only bring about a meeting be-

tween Jones and Boodle all may be satisfactorily arranged. I was turning over in my mind how I should accomplish this when I arrived at the "York." What do I see frisking about on the pavement before the door? Jones's dog—Boodle's dog—the dog that encompassed me with trouble and threatened all my prospects.

There was no one within sight—no one but an old lady, and she was not looking. A grand thought! I picked up the dog, tucked him under my coat, and ran away. I reached my lodgings, and locked myself in with the dog until half-past seven, when I again tucked him under my coat and made for the Greyhound in East Street. As luck would have it I arrived just as Boodle was getting into a fly to drive to the station.

"Here you are, Boodle," I said; "here's the dog."

"What; you don't mean—"

"There, there," I said; "put him into that basket, and be off with him as soon as you can."

"Thank you, sir, thank you," said Boodle, whipping the dog into the basket in which he had brought down his day's provender.

"And promise me one thing, Mr Boodle—that you will not tell any one who got him for you."

"Never, sir, never; you may depend upon

that." And Mr Boodle drove off with his dog in triumph.

Now, thought I, that business is settled and my mind's at rest. I shall return to town. I returned to town accordingly and dined—for the first time since I became mixed up in this dog business—at the Athanasian Club. Bishops were benignant, Fellows of the Royal Society greeted me with friendly nods. It was all right; they hadn't heard of Boodle and his dog.

It was highly gratifying, two days after this, to receive a visit from Mr Boodle, with a request that I would be good enough to accept the dog as a present. "You see, sir," said Mr Boodle, "I didn't care so much about the dog himself, but I was not going to be bested, you know. You've got him back for me, and you can have him. I wouldn't part with him, but I know he'll have a good home here."

"Well, thank you, Mr Boodle, he's a very pretty little dog, and I'm very much obliged indeed."

"Oh! don't mention it, sir; you're welcome, I'm sure." And Boodle's face beamed all over with a benevolent smile, and his eye twinkled with satisfaction, as he parted with his dog and bade me adieu.

My happiness was now complete. I had adroitly avoided an exposure and learnt a new pleasure in the faithful attachment of a dumb animal. But judge of my bewilderment when, after about a fortnight, I received the following letter from Jones:—

“Dear Sir,

“Brighton.

“Why did you not come and see my dog as you promised? I shall be in town to-morrow, and will call upon you and bring him with me. How about the cowkeeper? Is he still scouring the country in search of him? He needn't trouble himself; he shall never have him.

“Yours,

“J. JONES.”

What does this mean? Is not the dog lying here at my feet? Yes; of course he is. “Ponto!” He rises and wags his tail. Jones is joking; or it is some deeply-laid scheme to steal him again—to steal him from *me*! Ay! Master Jones, I shall beware of you. In the words of the popular song, Master Jones, “You don't get over me.”

Next day, in the expectation of a call from Jones, I carefully locked Ponto up in my study. Jones came, and in his arms he carried a white dog—a



very twin of Ponto. Or was it Ponto himself? Had he escaped from my study? Had Jones—

“You see,” said Jones, “I have brought the dog.”

“Nonsense,” I said, “that is not the dog; you—you don’t mean to say that that is Boodle’s dog?”

“No,” said Jones, “it’s not Boodle’s dog now, it’s mine; but this is the dog that Boodle had—the one you saw in my arms at Brighton.”

“Oh! you’re joking. Look here—here is Boodle’s dog;” and I opened the study door and called Ponto. The dog immediately ran into the room.

“Why, what on earth does this mean?” said Jones; and I saw that he was seriously puzzled. I told him the whole story, how I had whipped up the dog at the door of the “York,” how I had restored it to Boodle, and how Boodle, in gratitude, had made me a present of the animal. Jones stared for a moment in amazement, and then went into a fit of laughter, from which I thought he would never recover. At length he said—

“Do you know what you have done?”

“What do you mean?” I asked.

“Why you have stolen the wrong dog. This

is Ponto that I have in my arms now, and that animal of yours—why, it's the dog that the old lady lost."

"Old lady?"

"Yes; an old lady who was stopping at the 'York.' She was in an awful state about it, and offered ten pounds reward for it." And Jones went into another uncontrollable fit of laughter.

I could now interpret the twinkle of satisfaction that lurked in Boodle's eye when he presented me with that dog. Artful cowkeeper! *He* was not going to be had oop in a case of dog-stealing.

Am I? I ask the old lady at the "York." I am sure if she reads this confession she will be convinced that I carried out my felonious design with the very best intentions; and I hope she will think of my position as a professional man and a member of the Athanasian Club.

Ponto is here, in good health, waiting to be claimed.

"Why don't you take means at once to restore him to the rightful owner?" says the energetic reader.

"Insert an advertisement in 'The Times,'" &c.

That is all very well, but I do not intend to have my peace for ever destroyed by the animal. I know a most respectable member of society who

brought half the London canine "fancy" hovering round his doors, waylaying him for weeks and months. The unfortunate man, in the height of his humanity and honesty, had advertised for the owner of a dog he had picked up, or rather, of a dog who picked up him. Now, Nature never intended me for a martyr, so Ponto must wait to be claimed.

## THE LAST AT THE GREAT EXHIBITION.

ON Saturday, the 1st of November, 1862, I found myself in the Strand, wandering in the fog, like some uneasy spectre that had got a half-holiday, and did not know how to spend it. I had left off groaning and clanking my chains for the day, and for the week, and had come out to meet, and hold friendly converse with, other spectres that had similarly disburdened themselves.

But on this particular Saturday I do not encounter a single known face. I wander on and on, from St Clement's to St Mary-le-Strand; on to the fish shop, where hangs the portrait of a popular dramatist, enshrined in a frame of lobsters and crowned with endive—the popular dramatist apparently turning up his nose at a rather fat leg of mutton; on to the umbrella shop, where the proprietor pops out upon you suddenly and suggests comparison between himself and the head of Punch, which adorns one of

his sticks ; on to that seductive corner where you are invited to partake of a sandwich and a bumper of "burgundy," for four-pence, and where you invariably say, "No, thank you, I'd rather not ;" on to the lamps which mock you with the idea of a dairy ever having existed in the Strand ; on to that great gap in the pavement, with a family tea-shop straight ahead, where you invariably feel that you have reached the western limit of the Strand proper—on thus far, and I have not seen a friendly spectre to speak to.

I have not been spoken to, save, indeed, by the human spider near Exeter Hall, who has twice invited me to walk in and have my photograph taken. Why does he not ask me to walk in and have my head shaved or my throat cut ? What is the matter with the Strand to-day ? Usually on the Saturday afternoon I cannot walk the length of three shops without meeting some one to stop and have a few minutes' gossip with—to-day I meet no one.

I look in at the clubs—yes ; there are clubs in the Strand, magnificent, palatial places, with marble pillars and gilt cornices, where the members never drink anything but champagne, and make a rule of blackballing all dukes, marquises, and bishops—and I find the gorgeous saloons

deserted—deserted by all save the Bore. There he sits solus, patiently waiting for an opportunity to be disquisitive on the American war, or the revolution in Greece, or the rate of discount, or anything else, confound him.

No, no, I am not going to be caught by his poor chaff, miserable as I am. I withdraw my head from the door like a flash of lightning, for fear that he should see me, and pounce upon me, and make my life a torment unto me, for the rest of that dreary day. I go back to the deserted Strand, and feel a strong impulse to get upon a post, and in a loud voice demand to know where everybody has gone to. Suddenly, as if divining my perplexity, a voice shouts in my ear—

“Exhibition!”

“Eh!—what?—Exhibition! What is the fellow talking about? Does not the fog tell me that this is November, and—”

“Exhibition, sir—last day, sir.”

Suddenly I remember. To be sure. It was to have been closed on the 18th of October; but, entirely out of consideration for the public, the final day was postponed to the 1st of November. Now I see why the Strand is deserted. My question is answered. Everybody has gone to

the Exhibition. I shall go there too, and see the last of it.

I shall spend a pleasant afternoon, after all. I shall meet lots of fellows, I know; I shall dine once more pleasantly with Mr Morrish; I shall hear the closing musical ceremony; I shall endeavour to be the last man in the building, that I may boast of it afterwards, and then perhaps I shall be able to reimburse myself for all the attendant outlay, by making an article of my experience for one of the magazines.

What a relief it is on a dull day like this, when you have nothing to do, and nobody to speak to, suddenly to find an object—something to interest you, and direct your thoughts into a new channel! A minute or two ago I was the most wretched being in the Strand—which is saying something, I expect; but now I am sitting on the knife-board of a three-horse 'bus, as gay, as cheerful, and as expectant as a school-boy going home for the holidays. It is so pleasant to get out of one's beaten track, and tread new paths.

Although I am in the Strand every day of my life, it suddenly strikes me, as I pass Hungerford Market, that I have not been so far west for six months. Hungerford Market has been laid

in ruins since I was here last. On the occasion of my very latest visit to the spot, Mr Gatti was still dispensing his penny ices in that grand hall of his. Now that grand hall is a heap of ruins, and, as I pass the end of the street, I fancy I can see Mr Gatti, Marius-like, sitting among the broken bricks, weeping for his Carthage. Carts are taking the bricks away. What an opportunity for a burlesque writer to make a pun! How exhilarating to gaze once more upon the graceful fountains of Trafalgar Square! How delightful to see King George still continuing to enjoy his ride up Charing Cross on that high "metalled" steed of his!

And now the Haymarket, with its Palaces of the Seven Senses, all looking so dull, and dingy, and shabby in the daylight. How innocent it looks, now that Vathek has gone home to bed, and the reek of his debaucheries has cleared off, and ascended to high heaven! Lord Dundreary's palace on the right sadly wants a new coat of paint. Perhaps our friend Mr Asa Trenchard never has an opportunity of seeing it except at night, when the gas is alight, and the "loudest roars," &c., are going on. If he will oblige by looking at it in the day from the opposite side of the street, I "guess" he will feel ashamed of it.



Somebody has noticed that molluscos and crustaceous edibles have a strangely intimate association with vicious pleasures. This observation must have been made in the Haymarket. Every second shop is an emporium for the sale of lobsters and oysters! Why do not some of these shops advertise the "severest headaches," as the shop below furnishes the "loudest roars"?

Through the Circus and down Piccadilly, until we come to that squat, three-story, stone-faced house, timidly retiring behind gates from the street, as if afraid of its noise and bustle. The omnibus rider always looks about him here, in the hope of catching a glimpse of that sturdy-looking veteran with the whiskers like a lion's mane, who is often to be seen emerging from the gate on the back of a brown cob.

The drawing-room blinds are down, the shutters are closed in that little room where the veteran does all his writing at a stand-up desk, the outer gate is shut, and the driver, divining your thoughts, jerks his head towards the right, and says—"He's out of town."

Yes; he is at Broadlands to-day, giving Baron Thierry a lesson on political economy over a bottle of old port. Notwithstanding the gout, the veteran cannot take kindly to Mr Gladstone's claret.

Yes; that big new house is Baron Rothschild's, and that perky little one by the side of it is Mr Antrobus's, and while the driver (over his shoulder) is telling me how the Baron wanted to buy the perky little house to include in his own, and how Mr Antrobus wouldn't let him have it, and said he'd see the Baron blowed first, we get over the ground rapidly, leave the house that Hudson built to the right, rattle away through trucks and stalls of the Brompton Road, and here we are at the house that Kelk and Lucas built.

Why, it is half-past three, I declare; and the closing ceremony is to take place at four, and everybody is to be cleared out by five. I rush to the great door, throw down my half-crown—which the man rings on the top of the turnstile distrustfully—and find myself, before I know it, standing under the Eastern Dome.

Every part of the building seems densely packed with visitors, and the great throng in the nave streaming away to a point where it grows dim and spectral in the fog, presents something like a realization of Martin's picture of "Belshazzar's Feast," in the gallery yonder.

I push about among the stagnant crowd at Minton's fountain, and soon perceive that no one is troubling himself to go round and take a

last view of the various sights. They have seen them all long ago, and they are only waiting now for the closing ceremonial. What it is to be, or where it is to take place, no one seems precisely to know; but it is to happen at four o'clock, and our patience must soon be gratified, for it is now twenty minutes to that hour.

The crinolines are very expansive and inconvenient here under the eastern dome, and Piesse and Lubin's odours are positively suffocating. I have twenty minutes to spare. What shall I go and see and take a last farewell look at? The Tinted Venus? No. I prefer a marble statue that has not had a cup of weak chocolate thrown over it. The Koh-i-noor? I mutter this aloud, and a policeman at my elbow says—

“Can't get within a mile of it; the women have been swarming round it all day like flies round a sugar cask; pushin' in among 'em is like running agen a railing; an Armstrong pounder couldn't do it.”

I have it. I shall scamper through the picture galleries once more, and have another look at the “Blue Boy” and the “Sick Child.” I don't know whether I am a good judge of pictures or not; but of all the pictures in the Exhibition,

my two prime favourites are the "Blue Boy" and the "Sick Child."

I don't care about the blue jacket or the blue "breeks," though they are doubtless a great triumph over the stubbornness of ultramarine, but the boy's face is just the loveliest thing I ever saw upon canvas.

Again, I don't care twopence about those two grim French nurses in those impossible great flapping caps, but that little, weak child "wearing away" before your eyes on the blanket, is surely such pitiful tenderness as artist's pencil never expressed before. I shall never see those pictures again, but no length of time can ever rub them out from my memory. Ye who possess them may shut them up in your galleries, but I shall see them still. I have their living photographs in my mind's eye.

I care not to see more, and I scamper away through France, Holland, Belgium, Russia, Norway, and Sweden, and by a lucky chance arrive in the western dome just as the closing ceremony is commencing. I hurry down-stairs, and join the crowd under the dome. A Prussian organ is grunting out the symphony to "God save the Queen." A miscellaneous crowd of ladies in cloaks and heavy shawls have collected in a hud-

dled mass in front of the gallery. Is this the ceremony? Surely no. Surely the dazzling ceremonial of the 1st of May has not dwindled down to this. The symphony is grunted out, and a lady singer begins the first verse. Hats are removed slowly and doubtfully. "Oh, this can't be the ceremony. It must be some people in the gallery having a 'lark' with us." "No: the lady proceeds slowly and deliberately, and there is somebody conducting—conducting with a parasol, I think. It is the ceremony, Oh lame and impotent conclusion!

From all parts of the building the people are now struggling towards the Western Dome. They come in three broad, resistless streams, from the nave, from the machinery annexe, and from the department of the Zollverein. The platform under the dome becomes a sort of Redan. It will accommodate perhaps a thousand people, but it is determined that it shall accommodate ten thousand.

I can hear the crinolines snapping around me, and I feel the sharp point of a fractured hoop slowly and deliberating penetrating my leg. It is useless to halloo, for the people only think you are joining in the chorus. Everybody is joining in the chorus now, and I am thankful that the anthem is coming to an end. I shall escape from

the thrall of this hoop in another minute. Vain thought !

Thousands have come up at the last moment—evidently from the dining-rooms—and they insist upon an “encore.” The demand is supported by cheers and clapping of hands, and the organ, as if anxious to make the most of its last appearance, grunts out the symphony again. Once more we have the national anthem with the intermittent chorus, and I submit myself for another ten minutes to unseen surgery.

I think the lady will have succeeded in taking my leg quite off before they have done this time. But it appears as if they are never to have done. There is a cry now for “*Partant pour la Syrie.*” The organ is ever ready to oblige ; so are the singers ; and we are treated to the national anthem of France. Now for “*Rule Britannia :*” the organ is most happy. Now for “*Auld Lang Syne :*” the organ could not think of disobliging us. “*Yankee Doodle !*” cried one solitary voice : the organ gave a preliminary grunt as if going to begin, but was checked by a general laugh.

“No, no,” cried another voice—“We won’t go Home till Morning.”

“Bravo—hear, hear.”

This, indeed, seemed to be the motto and

resolve of the assembly. It was gradually getting dark, but nobody seemed inclined to move. The crowd under the dome was as dense as ever, and there they stood waiting for more music, or more something.

An individual—a Royal Commissioner I was told—got into a pulpit and shook a flag at us in the manner of an old woman driving chickens out of her garden by flapping her apron at them and saying, “hush—ah.” He might as well have shaken his flag at the Atlantic Ocean.

No; the exhibitors, no less than the public, seemed resolved to make a night of it. The music no sooner ceased under the Eastern Dome than every individual organ, piano, and harmonium in the building took it up and played away, at the full power of wind and keys, each on its own separate “hook.”

All kinds of airs and anthems were going on at the same moment. “God save the Queen” here; “Partant pour la Syrie” there; “Rule Britannia” over yonder; “The Red, White, and Blue” overhead: why, we were as well off for music as the old woman who made the famous equestrian expedition to Banbury.

The Royal Commissioner was evidently becoming angry. It was getting very dark, and the people

at the stalls were lighting the gas, and still the throng of visitors would not go. At length the Royal Commissioner hit upon a grand device. He went and set all the bells a-ringing. Now, there are hundreds of bells in the building, some of them nearly as big as "Great Tom." At it they went—clash, bang, ding dong, ting, ting, clash, bang, in such a Babylonian jangle of discord as never was heard.

Meeting with some of my lost friends, I seized this opportunity to retire to the refreshment department as far out of hearing of the bells as possible.

Mr Wilkie Collins has commented lately with great force of observation upon the ghastly aspect of the remains of a feast. What a huge, hideous realization of his picture was here!

The floor was fairly sawdusted with crumbled bread, watered here and there with spilt beer. Ham-bones and pieces of cold beef lay about in unsightly heaps like the scattered remnants of a hecatomb. Bones of fowls, shreds of salads, and the stump-ends of tongues were littered about the tables amid heaps of greasy plates, which seemed to have been shot on to the splashed and stained table-cloths like rubbish from a cart. The atmosphere of the place was heavy and pungent



with the stale odours of roast and boiled—roast, very much overdone, predominating. The bottles on the counters have been drained to the last half glass: four of them have to be emptied to make up two small glasses of brandy. An attempt to call up Allsopp from the vasty deep is a complete failure. The only response to a pull at the ivory handle is a gurgling noise in the pipe. Allsopp has run out.

The nymphs behind the counters wear a tired and languid look. They scarcely care to take your money now, and when they do take it they forget to give you the change. They are more occupied with the officials and stall-keepers going round to bid them good-bye than with you, a stranger, coming in to bother for brandy and pale ale on such a melancholy occasion.

“Good-bye, Jane;” “Good-bye, Susan,” say the stall-keepers, passing down the line, and offering their hands for a final, friendly shake.

“See you again this time ten years, I dare say;” and “Fare thee well, my own Mary Anne;” and “Give us a lock of your hair, my dear, to wear next my heart till the next Exhibition of 1872. Don’t go and get married, now, and have a large family, or I shan’t speak to you.”

There is a good deal of chaff and banter about

these leave-takings, but it is evident that the hearts of these Exhibition officials are "sad within," as the song says; they are sorry that it is all over: they will have to look out for new situations to-morrow, and it may be weeks, months before they will get so well suited.

The bells are still jangling; they have been at it now for a full half-hour by Bennet's clock, but some two or three thousand people are still lingering under the eastern dome and in the nave. It is quite dark now, and through the glass of the great dome we can see the stars looking down upon us.

Under those circumstances what a shame of us not to clear out and go! This is clearly the opinion of Mr Inspector Durkin, who is pushing about among us and trying the persuasive force of

"Now then, gentlemen, gentlemen; past five o'clock, gentlemen."

But each of the two thousand gentlemen and ladies who are lingering under the dome and in the nave is possessed by the insane desire to be the last person in the building, and consequently no one will budge.

The crowd has been a moody and silent one hitherto, but now the monotony of the proceedings is pleasantly varied by an excellent imitation

of a cock proceeding from a spot near the fountain. The crowd begins to cheer up: the cock-crower is rewarded with a round of applause, which encourages some one else to mew like a cat, some one else to bark like a dog, and still some one else to bray like a donkey (very natural).

Mr Inspector Durkin is still very good-humoured; but when it is proposed to give three cheers for Garibaldi, and also three cheers for the Pope, his brow becomes clouded, and he is evidently getting uneasy in his mind. Mr Inspector thinks he can cope with us now, for our force has sensibly diminished during the last ten minutes. He beckons to his men, and they come at his command along the nave and up the steps to the platform. They drive us slowly before them, step by step, inch by inch, to the doors.

I contrive to be one of the last, and I turn and take a final look. The next moment the doors close upon us with a bang. I have seen the last of the Great Exhibition of 1862.

THE END.

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